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COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

VOLUME VI SUMMER 1954 NUMBER 3

THE POETIC TREATMENT OF A PLATONIC-CHRISTIAN THEME

LEO SPITZER

THE Platonic and Christian motif of the yearning of the soul, exiled on this opaque earth from the splendor of Heaven, from the source of light whence it came—this subject matter, highly poetic in itself because of its suggestion of a world different from and more beautiful than our own, was commonplace in the Renaissance period, and probably found its most original treatment at the hands of Du Bellay in Sonnet 113 of *L'Olive* (1549-50). We may substantiate this statement by comparing the sonnet with its sources and with other contemporary poems treating the same subject matter. Strangely enough, our literary historians, while unanimous in their praise of the poem as a moving expression of a religious concept of love, fail to give reasons for their enthusiasm;[1] for example, Chamard in his *Joachim du Bellay* (1900) is content to speak of "le sonnet de l'Idée" as the "pearl" of the collection containing "ces vers admirables."

Si nostre vie est moins qu'une journée
En l'eternel, si l'an qui faict le tour
Chasse noz jours sans espoir de retour,
Si perissable est toute chose née,

Que songes-tu, mon ame emprisonnée?
Pourquoy te plaist l'obscur de nostre jour,

[1] R. V. Merrill, who in his book *The Platonism of Joachim du Bellay* (Chicago, 1925) has given us a clearer understanding of Du Bellay's poetry by his distinction between its Platonic and Petrarchistic elements (and consequently has recognized in Sonnet 113 the poet's purest expression of Platonism), is nonetheless inconclusive as to the "why" of the beauty of this sonnet, which to him represents "a lyric height which in [Du Bellay's] work is never surpassed," a poem "which for loftiness and delicacy of expression is scarcely matched in the French Renaissance."

Si pour voler en un plus cler sejour,
Tu as au dos l'aele bien empanée?

La, est le bien que tout esprit desire,
La, le repos ou tout le monde aspire,
La, est l'amour, la, le plaisir encore.

La, ô mon ame au plus hault ciel guidée!
Tu y pouras recongnoistre l'Idée
De la beauté, qu'en ce monde j'adore.

I believe that the æsthetic secret of the sonnet lies mainly in the fact that the motif of the soul's striving toward the Platonic Idea is not only *stated*, but *embodied* in rythmical devices. We feel drawn by the poem into a movement of its own which, as we come to the end, is revealed to be the attractive force of the Idea. And, since the words of the poem suggest an upward movement, the reader is induced to imitate this movement by modulations of his own voice, by a musical intonation which indeed creates music out of the words. It would, I believe, be impossible for anyone to read the poem except by starting in a low register and gradually and steadily raising the pitch, until finally the Idea of Beauty, "l'Idée de la beauté," is revealed in the last two lines—the rise of pitch becoming symbolic of the flight of the soul toward higher and higher spheres and ultimately to the Empyrean. That other world which it is poetry's function to reveal has thus been suggested to us by rhythm and pitch, quite sensuously perceptible linguistic devices chosen by the poet, which act on us, as it were, contagiously.

As for the sentence structure, the three hypothetic sentences of the first quatrain beginning with *si* contain the reasons for man's discontent with this earth (the threefold "if" is indeed here a "since"), and the varying length of these clauses reflects our restlessness. (The *enjambement* in line 2 cuts the three first lines into two unsymmetrical parts; only in line 4 are clause and line of equal length.) The fact that the first stanza is filled with dependent clauses, the main clause following only in Stanza 2, introduces a further rhythmical element portraying constraint. The soul, so to speak, is striving to free itself from the bonds of prison just as the dependent clauses make us fret to move impatiently toward the main clause, "Que songes-tu . . . ?" We come to realize our state of captivity in the prison of this world through the rhythm of the dependent clauses even before the word *emprisonnée* in the main clause spells out the nature of our existence. In the second stanza with its questions of benevolent admonishment—"Que songes-tu . . . ? Pourquoy te plaist . . . ?"—there is contained already a suggestion of liberation; to the idea of the prison are now opposed the ideas of "wing" and "flight," to "the darkness of the earthly day," "un plus cler sejour." Stanza 2 must be spoken with higher pitch than the des-

cription of uneasiness in Stanza 1—liberation is at the doorstep of the prison cell with the mention of "l'aele bien empanée"—and liberation is *realized* with the first *La* of Stanza 3, which everyone will naturally read with enormous energy ("LA, est le bien que tout esprit desire"), as if the soul had already leapt toward its salvation, and the sight of the goal were identical with the flight toward it; the unspecified "un plus cler sejour" has now indeed become a firmly established, well-determined goal. All the helpless repression of the soul described in Stanza 1, all the still doubting hope that was envisaged in Stanza 2, is now transcended; in the *la* is manifest the elation that goes with liberation, with the knowledge of the soul's destination. Indeed the whole second half of the sonnet represents the fulfilment of the desires described in the first half—and the alternation between collective and individual suggested in the first part (Stanza 1 is phrased in collective style: "nostre vie," "noz jours," "toute chose née," while Stanza 2 is entirely addressed to the individual soul: "mon ame") will reappear symmetrically in the second part, this time lifted to another climate (Stanza 3: "tout esprit," "tout le monde," collectivistic vs. Stanza 4, "ô mon ame," individualistic). Now the usual pattern of the sonnet—8 lines in the first, 6 in the second part—serves in our particular case the effect of accelerando; if the soul was relatively slow in freeing itself from the bonds of the prison, now in its flight heavenward it does what the French call "brûler les étapes"! The couplets in the tercets (cc d ee d), a French innovation in the Italianate form of the sonnet, give the impression of a double wing beat. And the five anaphoric *la*'s ("there . . . there . . . ") are like rungs on a foreshortened ladder that leads toward heaven; each *la* must be spoken according to the law of acceleration and on a higher note as a higher station in the spheres is reached with increasing swiftness.

After the calmer measure of Stanza 2 we find a new mood of impatience in Stanzas 3 and 4, parallel to that of the first stanza, except that this time we feel that release will come. In lines 9 and 10 the initial *La*, as it were a bold plunge into space, is followed by a movement of steady calm: "La, est le bien que tout esprit desire, / La, le repos ou tout le monde aspire"; in line 11 the movement quickens and becomes staccato in breathless anticipation of an end to torture (in musical terms we could also speak of a *stretta*). Some pedestrian critics have censured the *encore* of line 11 as a *cheville*, a padding due to exigencies of rhyme, but in reality this *encore* is a find worthy of a genius. I not only see in it a word added, in the manner of Latin *etiam* in lengthy enumerations, to point up the number of heavenly delights that await the soul; I also hear in it the encouraging shout to the forespent athlete before his last bout: *encore!*—an encouragement to the soul to make the last effort

before reaching the sky, an effort that will be rewarded by infinite joy at the moment of the Epiphany of the Idea of Beauty.[2]

We have indeed come, as in a dream, to the Empyrean, the tenth heaven—"la, ô mon ame au plus hault ciel guidée"—without any previous allusion to the nine successive heavens that have been passed and that must have magically receded before the soul like so many backdrops on a stage, melting one into the other. Indeed the five *la*'s do not mark the different spheres; they are only rungs which help us visualize the heavenly ladder. Nor has there been any previous mention of a guide. Only now, by wording so similar to that of Dante (and possibly inspired by him), do we realize that there must have been for this soul too a Beatrice "che guidò le penne de le mie ali a così alto volo." And, with the supernatural appearance of the Idea, calm and serenity at last prevail—in a double line that is indeed one sweeping long line, corresponding to the triumph, elation, relaxation, *épanchement* of the soul that has reached its goal: "La, ô mon ame au plus hault ciel guidée/ Tu y pouras recongnoistre l'Idée / De la beauté qu'en ce monde j'adore." The last two lines must be read as one because of the syntactic tie which exists between "l'Idée" and "de la beauté" (this is the metrical device, well known to the ancients, called by them synapheia). The word "l'Idée," of Greek origin and used by Du Bellay in its Greek double meaning of visual as well as mental perception, was still novel in France in the sixteenth century. (The rhyme "idée-guidée" occurs before Du Bellay in the Platonist Maurice Scève's *Délie.*) It has the impact of a proper name, of an allegory, or of a goddess such as Pallas Athena. It marks the apex of the poem (the zenith, if the nadir was "nostre vie" in line 1), and also the highest point reached by the voice of the reader—after which point the voice will immediately fall slightly when the soul, casting its glance back on the stretch of way it has wandered, is able to discern now on this earth, "ce monde," reflections or copies of the archetype of the Idea of Beauty. The final note of this "cyclical" poem[3] is then no longer one of contempt for this earth, but rather one of return to and reconciliation with this world, which appears now in a new light; it is no longer ephemeral as in the beginning, but transformed by the poet's experience of heavenly beauty. The verb "j'adore" suggests a religious attitude, sustained, confidently established, beyond all danger

[2] This *encore* must be spoken at a higher pitch than the rest of the line if we are justified in assuming that the modern French sentence melody existed already in the sixteenth century. I believe that, on the basis of the ascendant movement in the whole passage, we may indeed make this assumption, thus using the passage for the dating of a linguistic phenomenon.

[3] Shakespeare, in the famous passage from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in which he paraphrases Plato's teaching about poetic enthusiasm, mentions the basically cyclical character of the poetic vision: "The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance *from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven.*" With Du Bellay the cycle starts from and returns to earth.

of the abyss—and it must be spoken with a calm emotion that should stay with us even after we have finished the reading of the poem.[4]

Our sonnet is placed toward the end (the third from the last poem) of the collection *L'Olive,* which title, on the one hand, suggests the tree sacred to the goddess of wise inspiration, Athena or Minerva, on the other, contains an allusion to the name of the lady loved by the poet, just as in Petrarch's *Canzoniere* the constant symbol of Laura was the laurel, the sacred tree of Apollo—the implication being in both cases that the poet will win immortality, the favor of the gods, by singing of his love. There may even exist a closer kinship between Petrarch's *Canzoniere* and *L'Olive* than has been hitherto recognized. The critics generally have felt that the last poems of *L'Olive,* dealing more with religion than with love, are more perfect than the much more numerous love poems, but they have failed to recognize[4a] that the religious tone comes into the collection only at the moment when an illness of the beloved is mentioned (Sonnets 103 and 104) in terms that suggest the possibility of death—in an imprecation against cruel Nature who, having created the beautiful being, is bent now on destroying it. Sonnets on death follow—on the conquest of death by Christ, on the legitimacy of death—and Sonnet 113 marks the apogee of the reconciliation of the poet with the idea of death. I suggest that, in imitation of Petrarch's poems on the life and the death of Laura, Du Bellay, without expressly mentioning the actual death of Olive, treated in a manner similar to Petrarch's the metamorphosis of an earthly into a heavenly love after the death of the beloved.[5] We may then suspect that Du Bellay wished to imply in Sonnet 113 that the Olive he worshipped during her lifetime was no less than a copy or incarnation of the wisdom-inspiring Idea of Beauty, the olive tree that evokes the goddess Pallas Athena, and that he prides himself on having known on this earth an adumbration of Eternal Beauty.

Our consideration of the place the sonnet occupies in the whole collection brings home to us the truth that the Renaissance sonnet must, as a rule, not be viewed in isolation, but as a poetic unit within a se-

[4] M. Georges Poulet has suggested to me that in our poem we are dealing with three categories of time: the time of the ephemeral everyday world, the time of the eternal world of the Idea, and that time in which the soul participates in both this and the other world. It is then the particular achievement of Du Bellay to have offered in his "cyclic" poem a synthesis of the three modes of time.

[4a] Having written this paragraph I must acknowledge that V.-L. Saulnier in his *Du Bellay* (1951) has stated (p. 57): "[Olive] tombe malade; et sans doute elle meurt, comme la Laure de Pétrarque..."

[5] I must, however, confess that the wording of line 11 of Sonnet 160 ("Semblables erreurs"), line 14 of Sonnet 107 ("d'avoir sans fruit dependu tant de pleurs"), and lines 13-14 of Sonnet 108 ("tant que l'ardeur de la celeste flamme fasse oublier de l'autre le torment") shows only a sudden unmotivated awareness of the earthly love. One must not forget the note of sobriety prevailing throughout the collection *L'Olive,* which is placed under the auspices of Pallas Athena.

quence of sonnets. As is well known to literary historians, the Italian form of the sonnet is a secondary extraction (a *cobla esparsa*, in the terminology of the troubadours) from the *cansó* of the Provençal troubadours and the *canzone* of their Sicilian imitators, that multistanzaic form which portrayed love as a timeless phenomenon in endlessly long, elaborate, static stanzas. Historically a sonnet is nothing but *one* stanza detached from the *canzone*, with a rigorous architecture of its own corresponding to its dialectical content, established as a time unit—and the *canzoniere* of a Dante or Petrarch is the poetic biography of a feeling (of love) broken down into sonnets, i.e., into lyrical moments, rigorously delimited, equal time units, each of which has its own dialectical movement. With Dante and Petrarch, however, the lyrical moments, the sonnets, are still bound together by interspersed majestic *canzoni* which place these single lyrical moments *sub specie aeternitatis*. In a collection consisting *exclusively* of sonnets, such as *L'Olive*, the modern revolt against the timelessness of the Middle Ages has come to its full expression; the poet has done away with the mediaeval hierarchy of lyrical forms and proclaims as it were the democratic autonomy of all poetic moments. In such a collection of sonnets the high points are not marked by any outward metrical distinction.[6] The sonnet of the Idea is the "pearl" in the necklace of *L'Olive* only by virtue of its position in the collection (toward the end of the section "in morte") and by virtue of its perfect internal organization.

To sum up the observations made thus far, the philosophical idea of the striving of the soul toward the eternal archetype of Beauty is rendered by our poet in a sensuous manner, by rhythm and pitch, as these symbolize the force of attraction felt by the soul. Du Bellay achieves this effect without violating the traditional metrical form of the sonnet, simply by introducing into the normal decasyllables a particular rhythm suggestive of the idea of the sonnet. This achievement becomes all the more admirable if compared with the procedure of Goethe in his Pindaric poem "Ganymed" (written about 1781), in which the attractive force of Heaven is also depicted. Goethe replaces the traditional eagle of mythology that carried Ganymede to his master Zeus by an inner force of nature in spring, which is shown to lift the youth toward his Heavenly Father:

Ich komm'! ich komme!
Wohin? Ach, wohin?

Hinauf! Hinauf strebt's.
Es schweben die Wolken

[6] The genre of the sonnet may then have undergone the following historical changes: (1) detachment from the *canzone*: *cobla esparsa*; (2) incorporation as a unit within a *canzoniere* which also contains *canzoni*; (3) incorporation as a unit within a *canzoniere* (without *canzoni*); (4) detachment from the *canzoniere*: the single modern sonnet.

Abwärts, die Wolken
Neigen sich der sehnenden Liebe.
Mir! Mir!
In euerm Schoße
Aufwärts!
Umfangend umfangen!
Aufwärts an deinen Busen,
Alliebender Vater!

Goethe was able to render the impatience of the earthly creature to merge with his Creator so graphically that Schubert's song with its breathless *staccato* and *accelerando* appears to us as a quite natural musical response to the invitation offered by the poet's words. But Goethe produces this inward musicality of his poem by fragmentation of the sentences, which consist exclusively of exclamations, and by quite short verses varying in length and repeated as if in frenzy. Du Bellay, who depicts not a panerotic feeling but a philosophical idea, does not allow himself any such Pindaric freedom with verse or syntax.

Our observation about Du Bellay's rhythmic organization of the traditional sonnet pattern in the service of an idea (in the service of "the idea of the Idea") is verifiable by any reader; it must carry the *consensus omnium* simply because it can be ratified by the kinesthetic sense, and it is as factual and real a trait as is any observation in the natural sciences based on sensuous perception. As long as Frenchmen live, our poem will continue to produce out of itself the same kinesthetic reaction—and, even if the French language should die, our poem brought by miracle to a far-away island (together with a dictionary and a grammar of French) would elicit the same musical response. Indeed, our poem illustrates a general principle of expressivity which is also found in the *common language*. A phenomenon of expressivity is given in our languages only when content and form meet, when there is an acoustic parallelism between *significatum* and *significans*. For example, according to an observation made by Maurice Grammont, the word *ticktack*, often the first word learnt by babies in many countries, is an expressive way of designating a watch, in which the name, corresponding acoustically to the object so named, produces aesthetic pleasure in the child—whereas the word *tactic*, in which the sound-meaning correspondence is missing, is completely unexpressive. Similarly an impression of acoustic-ideological correspondence is produced by Du Bellay's particular devices in Sonnet 113. For an example of a poem with the same content as ours, but without an acoustic form that matches it—analogous then to the case of *tactic* in the general language —one has only to turn to Du Bellay's Sonnet 112. Here we are shown the Christian God in his providence choosing among the different Ideas representing the souls of men the most beautiful ones, which will then be attracted toward Him in a purifying flight toward Heaven:

Dedans le clos des occultes Idées,
Au grand troupeau des ames immortelles
Le Prevoyant a choisi les plus belles,
Pour estre à luy par luymesme guidées.

Lors peu à peu devers le ciel guindées
Dessus l'engin de leurs divines aeles
Vollent au seing des beautez eternelles,
Ou elle' sont de tout vice emondées.

Le Juste seul ses eleuz justifie
Les reanime en leur premiere vie,
Et à son Filz les faict quasi egaulx.

Si donq' le ciel est leur propre heritage,
Qui les poura frauder de leur partage
Au poinct qui est l'extreme de tous maulx?

One finds here the motifs of the upward movement of purification, the wings that carry the souls toward Heaven, and the guidance by divine powers; but the acoustic correspondence is missing. Because the union of sense and sound fails to materialize, the metaphoric expression of the sense, uninspired by rhythm, becomes tedious and contorted. What can we make of the "engine" of the divine wings which is wound up (*guindée*) like a pulley on a ship?[7] But why, we may ask, was the poet not concerned with phonetic correspondence in Sonnet 112? I surmise that the young Du Bellay attempted deliberately an ambitious harmonization of the world of Plato and of Christianity which went far beyond the allusions to such a synthesis contained in Petrarch; he identified, in too cavalier a fashion, Plato's divine souls, able to ascend toward God, with the pious souls elected by the provident and just Christian God, and made no serious attempt, in the fashion of such later poets as Milton or Luís de León, to fuse the two divergent religious climates by that verbal orchestration which allows the accents of one religion to melt into those of the other (note the awkwardness of the expression "quasi egaulx" in line 11 applied to the beautiful souls which are made "quasi-equal" to Christ). Thus, the hasty[8] philosophic wedding of Pla-

[7] In order to understand the choice of the prosaic term *guindée* by Du Bellay we must remember the experiments of Leonardo da Vinci (1846-90), in which the flyer stands upright and "above him are two pairs of wings, which are worked by *cords and pulleys* controlled by his head and limbs" (see Gillet's note in his edition of Torres Naharro's *Propalladia*, III, 373, and the literature quoted by him). Cf. also the line in La Cépède's *Théorèmes* addressed to the God who suffered for us on the Cross: "Guidez-nous, guindez-nous au sublime repos."

[8] Merrill suggests correctly for this sonnet "an alien source," the devotional poetry of Marguerite de Navarre, which inspired the last poems of *L'Olive* (poems that appear only in the second edition, dedicated to Queen Marguerite, the niece of Marguerite de Navarre). But Merrill failed to see first of all the "positional value" of Sonnet 113, which comes after 84 "in which the poet adapts his Platonic *procédés* to a fundamental thought which is un-Platonically personal," that is to Petrarchism, and after 112 which is already written "in the vein of combined Platonism and Christianity;" both of these are transcended by 113, which opens a perfect synthesis.

tonism and Christianity in Sonnet 112 must have prevented the other poetic wedding of sound and sense from materializing.[9] (We may, of course, also assume that Sonnet 112 was deliberately given less poetic development by the poet, who did not wish to interfere with the climactic position of 113, to which 112 is a prelude.) Incidentally, Sonnet 112, with its reference at the end to the earthly death of the elect who are destined to return to their heavenly source, could be used as evidence for my interpretation of the end of Sonnet 113 as an allusion to the death of Du Bellay's beloved Olive. In both poems the death of the beloved prompts the poet to remember the truth that the death of a beauty is not tantamount to death of the Idea of Beauty, that on the contrary the former represents only a return to the homeland of all beauty.[10]

[9] If poetic content did not find here its acoustic equivalent, the reverse is the case of Sonnet 81 in which an acoustic device is used without sufficient justification by the content:

"Celle qui tient l'aele de mon desir,
Par un seul ris achemine ma trace
Au paradis de sa divine grace,
Divin sejour du Dieu de mon plaisir.

La les amours volent tout à loisir,
La est l'honneur, engravé sus sa face,
La les vertus, ornement de sa race,
La les beautez, qu'au ciel on peult choisir.

Mais si d'un œil foudroyant elle tire
Dessus mon chef quelque traict de son ire,
J'abisme au fond de l'eternelle nuit.

La n'est ma soif aux ondes perissante,
La mon espoir & se fuit & se suit,
La meurt sans fin ma peine renaissante."

The Petrarchistic diptych (the smile of the beloved to her lover means Paradise, her frown Hell) shows two series of *la*'s, the one pointing toward Paradise the other toward Hell—but both are only "*la*'s of insistence," with no movement implied. (It must be noted that in this sonnet the beloved "holds [*tient*] the wings of the poet's desire," "directs" [*achemine*] this desire toward Paradise, where "les amours volent"—the actual flight toward Heaven is not yet contemplated.) The movement of flight appears in our collection for the first time in the religious Sonnet 107 (surely less effective than 113) where *la* is preceded and followed by *sus* (pointing toward the rainbow of divine love):

"*Sus, sus,* mon ame, ouvre l'œil et contemple...
La, de pitié est le parfaict exemple:
Sus donc, mes vers, d'un vol sempiternel
Portez mes vœux en son temple eternel..."

It is as though the poet himself, within our collection of poems, were trying his wings before finally taking flight.

[10] Sonnet 112 could, it is true, be construed also as a justification of death as such, which loses its sting if the soul can hope for its "election" by God.

We shall now compare Sonnet 113 with its sources[11] in order to ap-

[11] We must, of course, take into consideration as sources certain poems of Petrarch and Maurice Scève. In Petrarch (Sonnet 169) *idea* rhymes with *dea* (goddess), and this association given by the Italian language, together with the tradition of the "donna angelicata," of the beloved sent from Heaven to earth "a miracol mostrare" (Dante, *Vita Nuova*, Sonnet 15), lent itself to a poem with *descending* movement:

"In qual parte del ciel, in quale idea
Era l'essempio, onde Natura tolse
Quel bel viso leggiadro, in ch'ella volse
Mostrar qua giú quanto lassú potea?

Qual ninfa in fonti, in selve mai qual dea,
Chiome d'oro si fino a l'aura sciolse?
Quando un cor tante in sé vertuti accolse?
Ben che la somma è di mia morte rea.

Per divina bellezza indarno mira
Chi gli occhi de costei già mai non vide..."

The idea or exemplar of Laura's *divina bellezza* is shown here as originating in Heaven; on earth one seeks it in vain (*indarno*), the only *συνδεσμός* between *la sù* and *qua giù* being Laura. Muratori has said that in this poem Petrarch "per esaltare Laura, divenuto Platonico, *ascende in cielo* [italics mine], interroga con maraviglia, immagina colei quasi uno sforzo della natura...," but he should rather have said: "the poet has ascended to Heaven," has taken from the start his stand in Heaven, to descend in the poem toward the earth. He has adopted the perspective of the Creator who looks from above down on this earth, in the same manner as Dante has his St. Thomas in Paradise (*Par.*, XIII, 52) describe the creation as a realization, on different descending levels, of the divine Idea. Only Petrarch has abandoned the concept of the monotheistic god and, while preserving the perspective "from Heaven to earth," dissolves him into "an idea or a nymph or a goddess"; by his rhetorical questions, "In qual parte del ciel, in quale idea... Qual ninfa... qual dea?" (in which, unlike Plato, he places the Idea and the deity on one level), he makes the earthly beloved appear as a miraculous being; the eyes of the reader are directed toward earth where she, an undoubtable reality, dwells, while the forces that engendered her remain ultimately unknown. J. G. Bürger, who in 1798 paraphrased Petrarch's sonnet, entitled it correctly "Die Unvergleichliche" (The Incomparable One). Petrarch's poem is not "cyclic," but strictly "geotropic."

In Maurice Scève's *Délie*, dizain II, a re-elaboration of Petrarch's Sonnet 169 in which the beloved is also related to the Idea, we find again the descending movement:

"Le Naturant par ses haultes Idées
Rendit de soy la Nature admirable.
Par les vertus de sa vertu guidées
S'esvertua en œuvre esmerveillable.
Car de tout bien, voyre es Dieux desirable,
Parfeit un corps en sa parfection,
Mouvant aux Cieulx telle admiration,
Qu'au premier œil mon ame l'adora,
Comme de tous la delectation
Et de moy seul fatale Pandora."

Le Naturant, that is, *natura naturans* or God, has produced, according to His heavenly "idea," a perfect specimen of *natura naturata*, the beloved, who must then be "adored" by the poet on earth as a divine being. However, what particularly interests Scève is the Aristotelian or mediaeval thought of potentiality become

praise its originality. As Vianey showed in *Le Pétrarquisme en France* (1909), it is a paraphrase of an Italian sonnet written by the Petrarchist Bernardino Daniello, which Du Bellay may have read in an anthology published in 1545 by a Venetian printer:

Se 'l viver nostro è breve oscuro giorno
Press' a l'eterno, e pien d'affanni e mali;
E più veloci assai che venti o strali,
Ne vedi ir gli anni e più non far ritorno:

Alma, che fai? che non ti miri intorno
Sepolta in cieco error tra le mortali
Noiose cure? e poi ti son date ali
Da volar a l'eterno alto soggiorno,

Scuotile trista, ch'è ben tempo homai,
Fuor del visco mondan ch'è sì tenace,
E le dispiega al ciel per dritta via:

Ivi è quel sommo ben ch'ogni huom desia;
Ivi 'l vero riposo; ivi la pace
Ch'indarno tu quagiù cercando vai.

This is a typical case of two poems having an identical content, and to a great extent identical wording, while differing vastly in inward form. If Daniello, by the syntactical concatenation of his Stanzas 1-3, culminating in the imperative "scuotile," aptly expressed the desire of the soul to free itself from the "visco mondan," the worldly mire, he did not find an adequate rhythmic expression for the wings naturally given to the soul. The whole third stanza, which administers to the soul a didactic admonishment about breaking its chains, is boldly omitted by Du Bellay who, once he has reminded the soul of its wings, immediately sets before her the heavenly goal; it is the sudden revelation of the goal which gives all its dramatic intensity to the first *Ia*. With Du Bellay the soul needs no exhortation to follow the straight way ("la dritta via") to Heaven; with him the straight way is given immediately with the mention of the wings, and all earthly mire is left far behind. While

reality, which he expresses in a mediaeval, or *rhétoriqueur* manner, by the figure of *adnominatio*. A phrase such as "par les vertus de sa vertu guidées s'esvertua en œuvre esmerveillable" is the adequate rendering of the production by Nature (out of itself, *de soy*, line 2) of the thing of beauty, viz. Délie, "object de plus haulte vertu," as the frontispiece says, who is celebrated in *dizains* (10 being the perfect number). Similarly, the perfect, self-contained being Délie is portrayed in the line "parfeit un corps en sa parfection," which opens and closes with the stem of "perfection," and the sound symbolism of *adnominatio* (*esvertua, esmerveillable; admirable—admiration—adora; desirable—delectation*) spreads over the whole poem its net of correspondences, suggesting the interrelation between the action of Délie's beauty and its effect. Scève has poetically rendered in his own way the activity of *natura naturans* embodying itself in *natura naturata*.

Thus, neither Petrarch's nor Scève's poem reflects the true Platonism which appears in Du Bellay's Sonnet 113.

Daniello's three *ivi*'s refer only to *ciel*, already mentioned as the goal in line 8, the *la*'s of Du Bellay anticipate, indeed evoke that high goal before it is explicitly designated; only later do we learn that it is toward the Empyrean, "le plus hault ciel," that the soul has proceeded. For with Du Bellay the soul congenitally knows its goal and has no need to have its course mapped. Daniello, more a preacher than a poet, was concerned with teaching us quietly, in a predicatorial trichotomy, that Heaven is the seat of the highest good, of repose and peace, which are not found on this earth; whereas the true lyricist, Du Bellay, evokes in his five *la*-segments the impatience of the soul to reach Heaven. Indeed, while the *ivi*'s of Daniello refer to the transmundane world envisaged as a totality, each *la* of Du Bellay seems to point as it were to another level of the heavenly spheres. Nor is it mere chance that the Frenchman, in line with his more sensuous talent, includes, as two additional *la*-members, love and joy (the very same demigods he had shown us in the earthly paradise of Sonnet 81), and introduces as the climax the Epiphany of the Idea with all its emotional and dramatic impact. Finally, once Du Bellay has glimpsed the Idea in the tenth heaven, he is not, like the Italian, tempted to cast a last bitter glance toward the vanity of the earth, but is able at last to recognize also on this earth the adumbrations of the Idea of Beauty, the συνδεσμός, the tie between the two worlds. By this assumption Plato had succeeded in bridging the gap between them implicit in his basically dualistic system. In Du Bellay Platonism has not been preached to us, it has been lived for us; the force of attraction of the Platonic idea has been rhythmically impersonated. With very slight changes Du Bellay was able to create a poem totally different from that of the Italian—different in content as well as in form—the typical achievement of a classicist, who produces great results with minimum effort.

There exists a second French paraphrase of the same poem of Daniello (see Chamard's edition of Du Bellay, I, 122, note 1), published in the second part of the sixteenth century by Philippe Desportes in his *Œuvres chrétiennes*, written during a long illness. It is one of a cycle of *Sonnets spirituels*, which reflect the spirit of the Counter-Reformation:

Si la course annuelle en serpent retournée
Devance un trait volant par le ciel emporté,
Si la plus longue vie est moins qu'une journée,
Une heure, une minute, envers l'eternité;

Que songes-tu, mon ame, en la terre enchaisnée?
Quel appast tient ici ton desir arresté?
Faveur, thresors, grandeurs, ne sont que vanité,
Trompans des fols mortels la race infortunée.

Puisque l'heur souverain ailleurs se doit chercher,
Il faut de ces gluaux ton plumage arracher
Et voller dans le ciel d'une legère traicte.

Là se trouve le bien affranchi de souci,
La foy, l'amour sans feinte et la beauté parfaicte
Qu'à clos yeux, sans profit, tu vas cherchant ici.

Although the "Que songes-tu . . . ?" in line 5 is a reminiscence of Du Bellay, there is in Desportes' Christian Heaven no vestige of Du Bellay's *amour* and *plaisir*; the Idea of Beauty, itself not called Idea, is here surrounded by a court of pious allegories, the true Good, Faith, Charity. Predicatorial verses insisting on the vanity of the world are added (lines 7-8), and, of course, in this lugubrious climate of what the Spaniards of the same period would call *desengaño* the joyous musical effects of Du Bellay could not thrive. The anaphora which embodied flying with Du Bellay is entirely dropped—we are told only that the soul should fly "d'une legère traicte." The last line, prosaic to the extreme, falls flat: "Qu'à clos yeux, sans profit, tu vas cherchant ici."

What is the source of the sonnet of Bernardino Daniello, on which in turn Du Bellay's and Desportes' sonnets are based? Is it Plato's dialogue, *Phaedrus*? In that dialogue we find indeed the simile of the wings applied to the soul. The soul (of the gods and of man) is compared there to a chariot, the charioteer and the two horses of which are winged. In the case of the gods the two horses, equally inspired by virtue, in their common effort draw the chariot toward the soul's true goal, while in the case of man one horse is wicked and tends to draw the chariot down toward an alien goal. The wings given to the soul have the function of "lifting what is naturally heavy" in it toward the heights of the divine, toward the contemplation of divine nature consisting in beauty, wisdom, and goodness—but there is also given to the soul of man the possibility to ruin or lose its wings and to fall heavily to earth.[12]

[12] Plato's myth of the soul soaring toward the Idea is obviously conceived as a foil to the traditional myth of Icarus embodying the hybris of man who attempts to transcend his own humanity and must be dashed headlong into the ocean. Both myths, while derived from man's primitive desire to fly upward and not fall downward, a desire which recurs often in our dreams, represent, according to Gaston Bachelard, *L'Air et les songes* (1943), a stage beyond—an intellectualization which adds to the primitive experience the element of a goal. For the primitive experience consists simply in the "vol onirique," the organic feeling of freedom from the law of gravity, of vertical dynamic ascension without possibility of danger, as experienced in dreams which lift us skyward: "Dans le rêve, on ne vole pas pour aller aux cieux; on *monte* aux cieux parce que l'on vole." As for the particular myth of Icarus, Bachelard considers the motif of man's rivalry with the birds as secondary; in comparison, the figure of Mercury to whose heels are attached wings (*talaria*) is closer to the original "oneiric" reality.

Although the French philosopher of movement does not mention Du Bellay's sonnet, he would probably single out as the primordially human fact in that poem the rhythmical impersonation of the upward momentum. Our purpose, however, is obviously not the reconstruction of the primitive psychological basis of our poem, but the apperception of the given artistic unit.

The association of the Platonic myth with the Icarus motif was re-established in the Renaissance period, the *rapprochement* being made, for example, by Sannazaro, whose sonnet on Icarus' death (64) follows immediately one (63) in

The truly winged human soul is that of the philosopher. When he encounters on this earth a reflection of divine beauty, a divine frenzy or enthusiasm seizes him, a frenzy due to his remembrance (ἀνάμνησις) of the εἶδος which man had once glimpsed, before his fall, when he was still allied with the gods. The common people are right, then, says Plato, in calling the philosopher a fool. For the philosopher, when recognizing the exemplar of beauty in earthly beauty, starts, as it were, to take flight, with fresh wings and impatience to fly; but, alas, can only look upward like a bird, blind to the things of this earth. "Every human soul must have indeed once contemplated the true reality (τά ὄντα); otherwise it could not have become a living being." To remember that vision of true reality is given only to a few elect human beings and this only in the state of ecstasy. It is such a state of ecstasy in a philosopher who "recognizes" the Idea of Beauty that is described in Du Bellay's sonnet, a state of beatific vision (ἐποπτεία, a term of the Eleusinian mysteries, also used by Plato). We also find in the sonnet traces of the Greek equation, "Knowing=seeing," expressed in the Greek language by the word family εἶδος, ἰδέα, ἰδεῖν=*videre*, and of the Neoplatonic association of knowing with illumination, as indicated in the progression from "l'obscur de nostre jour" to "un plus cler sejour" to the Empyrean, the sphere of pure fire where the Idea dwells.

But there are several details in the sonnets of Daniello and Du Bellay which cannot come from the *Phaedrus*: e.g., the idea of the transient

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which the loving soul, inspired by "l'aria del bel desío" of the beloved, "convien che al ciel si leve ed erga." And it was only natural that a Platonist poet like Tansillo should infer that it is love that lifts the soul of an Icarus to heavenly heights, only to let this victim of love find a tragic but glorious death. Compare his two sonnets "Amor m'impenna l'ale" and "Poi che spiegat' ho l'ale al bel desío," the second of which the critics generally consider as the more beautiful because of the dramatic impersonation in a dialogue taking place in mid-air between the poet's heart, which trembles with fear and delight as it soars upward, and the unperturbed, stoic self of the poet which admonishes the heart to continue its heroic flight toward death: "Fendi secur le nubi, e muor contento." (In this poem there is an allusion to Boethius, in line 4, "E spregio il mondo, e verso 'l ciel m'invio.")

As is well known, Giordano Bruno included Tansillo's poem, "Poi che spiegat' ho l'ale al bel desío," in his *Eroici furori* (Dialogue III) as an example of the heroic striving, as taught by the Platonists, of the human soul toward perfection. According to Benedetto Croce (*Problemi di estetica*, p. 138) Giordano Bruno's re-interpretation of Tansillo's sonnet implies an alteration of the meaning intended by Tansillo; for the goal represented by his "bel desío" was love, not perfection, as his commentator assumes. Thus "bel desío" in Tansillo and in Tansillo-Bruno would be "parole diverse," homonyms, as grammarians would say; and Croce feels entitled to distinguish the one poem *secundum Tansillum*, from the the other, *secundum Nolanum* (=Bruno)—as if there actually existed two different poems. But who does not see that, for a Platonist, love of the perfect woman and love of perfection coincide (just as *Idée* in Du Bellay's sonnet represents, in my interpretation, both the Idea of Perfection and the Perfect Lady) and that the "bel desío" directed toward perfection and the "bel desío" for the beloved are ultimately the same feeling? Thus Bruno has not altered the meaning of the sonnet of Tansillo, but has only developed one of its implied aspects.

nature of earthly things, and the identification of the highest good with peace and repose, to say nothing of such stylistic elements as the "if= since" clauses or the threefold (fivefold) anaphora with "there." All these features come (and this has not heretofore been pointed out) from Boethius' *De consolatione Philosophiae*. Here I must acknowledge my indebtedness to a former student of mine, Dr. Louise Allan Armstrong, who drew my attention to portions of this dialogue between Dame Philosophy and the author, a former Roman high official and scholar (who may or may not have been a Christian). He is suffering in a dark jail and Philosophy, that is, a Stoic or Christian version of Platonism, brings him her light. The dialogue in prose is interspersed with various poems (*metra*) intended to sum up the philosophical discussion at its different stages, from which I shall quote several passages (II, *metrum* 3):

> Rara *si* constat sua forma mundo,
> *si* tantas variat vices,
> Crede fortunis hominum caducis,
> bonis crede fugacibus!
> Constat aeterna positumque lege est,
> ut constet genitum nihil.

Here we find a double *si*-clause (with *si* meaning "since") and also the idea of the transciency of all created things.[12a] Again, at the end of a hymn (III, *metrum* 7) to the creator and moderator of the world, which contains a cosmic panorama derived from Plato's *Timaeus*:

> Da, pater, augustam menti conscendere sedem,
> da fontem lustrare boni, da luce reperta
> in te conspicuos animi defigere visus.
> Dissica terrenae nebulas et pondera molis
> atque tuo splendore mica; *tu namque serenum,*
> *tu requies tranquilla piis, te cernere finis,*
> principium, vector, dux, semita, terminus idem,

we find *requies tranquilla*, repose and peace, allied with the radiance of Heaven and the soul's liberation from the heaviness of solid matter (*pondera molis*). Another poem (III, *metrum* 10), after the conclusion has been reached in the previous dialogue that God and true bliss are one, ends as follows:

> *Huc* omnes pariter venite capti,
> quos fallax ligat improbis catenis
> terrenas habitans libido mentes,
> *haec* erit vobis requies laborum,[12b]

[12a] A fourfold *si* ("since") is used, in connection with man's mortality, in Seneca's *Consolatio ad Marciam*: "*If* no lament is able to recall the dead to life, *if* destiny is inexorable and fixed for eternity, *if* no misery can be undone and *if* death holds firmly whatever it has seized, let grief cease which in itself is perishable."

[12b] As is shown in *MLN*, LXIX (1954), 307, this passage is the source of a sixteenth-century English poem:

hic portus placida manens quiete,
hoc patens unum miseris asylum.

Again, emphasis on peace and repose, and an anaphoric repetition of demonstratives *huc, haec, hic, hoc*, which foreshadow the *la*'s and *ivi*'s of the Renaissance poets. Finally, in another exhortation by Philosophy to Boethius to follow her heavenward (IV, 1), we find two successive mentions of the wings given to the soul, first in prose: "viam tibi, quae te domum revehat, ostendam. *Pennas etiam tuae menti*, quibus se in altum tollere possit, *ad figam*, ut perturbatione depulsa sospes in patriam meo ductu, mea semita, meis etiam vehiculis revertaris"—then in verse:

Sunt etenim pennae volucres mihi,
quae celsa conscendant poli;
quas sibi cum velox mens induit,
terras perosa despicit...

This passage left its imprint on Dante, who called Beatrice "quella pia che guidò le penne de le mie ali a così alto volo," and on Chaucer: "A thought may flee so hye / With fetheres of Philosophy / to passen everych element." Boethius then presents a picture, conceived in Ptolemaic terms, of the whole astronomical and natural cosmos as ruled over by God, and adds:

Hic regum sceptrum dominus tenet
orbisque habenas temperat
et volucrem currum stabilis regit
rerum coruscus arbiter.

Huc te si reducem referat via,
quam nunc requiris immemor,
haec, dices, memini, patria est mihi,
hinc ortus, *hic* sistam gradum.

These lines again show a fivefold anaphora of demonstratives (*hic, huc, haec, hinc, hic*) and also the Platonic conception of remembrance (*ἀνάμνησις, memini*), here rhetorically emphasized by repetition of the prefix *re-* (*reducem, referat, requiris*). The rhetorical device of anaphoric pronouns is well known to any reader of Ovid or Martial, the rhetorical Augustan poets. More purely lyrical poets such as Catullus or Tibullus seem to shun this device. One may remember such passages as the following in *Tristia*, where the "ravages of time" are described:

Hoc [sc. tempus] tenuat dentem terram renovantis aratri,
hoc rigidas silices, *hoc* adamanta terit,
hoc etiam saevas paulatim mitigat iras,
hoc minuit luctus maestaque corda levat.

Instead of saying "time blunts the edge of the plowshare, wears away the flint stone and the steel, mitigates wrath, diminishes sorrow, and

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"Here ys the reste of all your besynesse,
Here ys the porte of peese & restfulness..."

cheers up the sad heart," the rhetorical lyricist prefers to hammer into our minds the fact of the *identity* of the cause (*hoc*) behind these different developments, an overstressing which is lost on our modern imagination; once we have understood this identity, tediousness is the immediate consequence of repetition. The series of anaphoras in Boethius is not basically different from that in Ovid. Boethius too wishes to impress on us a single idea[13]—that the true homeland of man's soul

[13] Cf. also Virgil, *Ecl.*, 10, 41:

"Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori,
hic nemus; hic ipso tecum consumerer aevo."

Ulrich Leo in *Torquato Tasso* (Bern, 1951) has excellently characterized the "linearity" of the device of anaphora (which he contrasts with "antithesis" as a linguistic reflection of a divided personality): "Die *Anapher* als das sich selbst immer von neuem, in gleichbleibender oder gewandelter Gestalt, wiederholende, und durch diese Selbstwiederholung den betreffenden Textabschnitt rhythmisch gliedernde und rahmende Kennwort: sie eignet sich in der Tat als Hauptausdrucksmittel einer sich selbst bejahenden, mit sich selbst grundsätzlich einverstandenen, ohne immanente Gegensätzlichkeit auf ein Sinnziel zuschreitenden Welt- und Gottesanschauung..."

We may say that Du Bellay in Sonnet 113 has, without breaking the basic linearity of the anaphora, given it a second dimension, that of height, which, by contrast with man's basically earth-bound nature, succeeds in introducing into that rhetorical device a poetic element. On the other hand, the anaphora combined with antithesis in Sonnet 84 produces a distressing contradictory impression, as it were of "assurance while being torn."

With a rhetorical poet such as Tasso who, as Leo shows (p. 241), had always craved for liberation from the painful restrictions of the world of time, we are not surprised to find the "there"-anaphora replaced by a "then"-anaphora, "then" being the ideal time when change and movement cease, the time of divine quiet and repose and eternity after the Day of Judgment; cf. *Il Mondo creato*, VII, 397-445:

"... Oh lieto giorno,
Giorno sacro e felice, in cui s'eterna
La pompa trionfal, la gloria e 'l canto
E la quiete! *Allor quiete e pace*
Avran le menti rapide e rotanti,
Ch'han sì vari pensier, sì vario il moto...
E di Fortuna ancor l'instabil rota
Ferma allor fia, s'ella col ciel si volge.
Riposo ancora avranno i nostri affetti,
Che incontra la divina eccelsa mente
Fanno ritrosi passi e torto calle...
E giusto è ben che s'*allor fine* avranno
I moti de le stelle erranti e fisse,
L'abbiano quelli ancor di mente e d' alma
Umana, ch'assembrar del cielo il corso.
Tutti avran *pace allor* nel fisso punto
De la Divinità. *Riposo eterno*
Sarà l'intender nostro e 'l nostro amore,
Che in tante guise ora si varia e cangia,
E con tante volubili rivolte.
Riposo eterno fia la grazia e 'l merto,
E 'n seggio eterno. Or chi fra noi s'attempa
In aspettando il giorno, e soffra e speri...

is the beyond. His five demonstratives, used as it were to show us the way to our destination, are no less didactic than, say, in a mediaeval painting, the fingers of different sages or saints all pointing toward Heaven—so many pictorial anaphoras. While in Dante's *Commedia* the didactic anaphora is far from lacking (my friend Chandler Beall has brought to my attention the following passages: *Purg.*, XII, 25-63: "vedrá"; *Par.*, XIX, 115-130: "lì si vedrá," "vedrassi"; XX, 40, 46, 52, 58, 64, 70: "ora conosce"; XXXIII, 14-25: "in te"[13a]), in the crucial passage (*Par.*, XXII, 61 seq.) in which St. Benedict, speaking of the Empyrean, has an occasion for paraphrasing Boethius, the anaphora was strangely enough omitted by the Italian poet:

> ... Frate, il tuo alto desio
> s'adempierà in su l'ultima spera ...
> *Ivi è perfetta, matura ed intera*
> ciascuna disianza; *in quella sola*
> è ogni parte là ove sempr'era.

In a late Latin text such as Boethius, which for a thousand years was interpreted as a monument of Christian faith in the beyond, the particular set of anaphoras came to be felt as a supreme expression of the human yearning for the other world—and to Renaissance sensibilities it seemed to point to a world in which the synthesis of Christianity and Platonism was realized. We witness here the wondrous vitality of a *topos*, of a formal pattern, once it has concluded a significant alliance with a great concept, once sound and meaning have met to form a perfect expressive unit. The *hoc*-anaphora applied by Ovid to time presented itself for centuries to students of the classics without ever striking a response comparable to that of the *topos* of the *hic, haec, huc*, which Boethius linked with Platonic-Christian otherworldliness, and which came to a unique revival a thousand years after Boethius.

Du Bellay added to the *topos* an ascensional movement, and enabled it to penetrate into nineteenth-century romantic poetry;[14] for Lamar-

> Così prepari in sè l'interno albergo,
> Pur volubile ancora e pur costante
> Ne' giri incerti, infin che 'l nudo spirto
> Voli a quella sublime *eterna reggia*
> *Là dove* è 'l sacerdozio aggiunto al regno."

One will notice in the last lines the Boethian reminiscence of the soul flying toward the world of timelessness (seen, however, in terms of the Counter-Reformation).

[13a] W. Kranz has shown that this anaphoric passage is an imitation of Boethius' hymn (III, *metrum* 9), "Tu namque serenum, tu requies tranquilla piis, te cernere finis." See *RF*, LXIII (1951), 72.

[14] The *là* in the refrain of Baudelaire's "L'Invitation au voyage" (1855) is basically one of insistence also. In this poem, patterned on Goethe's "Mignon" ("Kennst du das Land ..."), Goethe's refrain, "Dahin, dahin möcht' ich mit dir, o mein Geliebter, ziehn," has been deliberately divested of its flavor of vague,

tine in "L'Isolement," a poetic meditation written in 1818, uses it under the influence of a vague mood of *ennui* and disillusionment which makes him desire death and an afterlife in a better world:

> Là, je m'enivrerais à la source où j'aspire,
> Là, je retrouverais et l'espoir et l'amour,
> Et ce bien idéal que toute âme désire,
> Et qui n'a pas de nom au terrestre séjour!

We may, perhaps, sense in this romantic *pastiche* of Du Bellay a certain lack of intellectual contour, an amorphous, semireligious pantheism which is neither strong enough to posit *all* three Christian theological virtues—faith, hope, and love—nor to convince us of the reality of the Platonic idea which is here diluted into a rather anodyne *bien idéal*. We may even doubt the seriousness of his purported love of death (so sensuously expressed by Walt Whitman, Baudelaire, and Wagner); Lamartine is speaking in a cautious conditional: "Là je m'enivrerais"—there (in that better world) I would become intoxicated, i.e., if I died. The device of the repetition of the *là*'s has been used by Lamartine in other poems *ad nauseam*.[15] We witness here the normal trivialization in the course of time of a stylistic device which was once a unique find fit for one particular mood, in one particular poem. Similarly the *terza rima* which Dante devised for the one poem to which Heaven and earth set their hand, as a symbol of the Trinity, subsequently became one metrical form among others. John Livingstone Lowes has written of "the inability of the new to remain the new for more than a fleeting moment. The less commonplace it is, the more eagerly it is seized upon, and the more swiftly and surely worn trite. The cliché is merely the sometime novel that has been loved not wisely but too well."

We have hitherto mentioned only French and Italian echoes of the *hic, huc, haec* passages of Boethius linked with Platonism. But we must not forget the Spain of the Golden Age, in which the Christian Platon-

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boundless nostalgia and made what I would call "definitional"; the movement of the "voyage" is here replaced by a static definition of the goal:

> "Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
> Luxe, calme et volupté."

While the stanzas of "L'Invitation" convey the sensuous impression of a gradual extinction of all desires, culminating in "a world asleep in the warmth of light" (Stanza 3), the refrain, from the beginning, introduces into the picture of voluptuous beauty an intellectual note of abiding calm and order which the repetition of the refrain only reinforces. Baudelaire's poem is antiromantic and finite in essence.

[15] Roustan, *Précis d'explication française*, p. 381, compares our passage with lines 165-232 of the poem "Milly" (in *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*), in which it is a remembered landscape that is evoked by the poet: "Et c'est là qu'est mon cœur! Ce sont là les séjours, les sites, les rivages Dont mon âme évoque les images..." "Là, Là, Voilà, Voilà, Voilà, Voilà, Voici, C'est ici, Là, Là, Là, Voilà." The nostalgic demonstratives here are also the tie that binds together numerous descriptive details that would not otherwise fuse into a picture.

ist Fray Luís de León in his poem "Noche serena" evoked, after Boethius, both man's nostalgia for the beyond in the midst of this earth of exile, lowliness, deceit, and torpor (from which the ringing voice of the Spanish baroque poet summons him to awake), and the cosmic vision of the night sky which Daniello and Du Bellay omitted. And, not unexpectedly, in Fray Luís' sensuously beautiful description of the beyond (Stanzas 14-16) we encounter five times an anaphoric adverb *aquí*:

¿Quién es el que esto mira,
y precia la bajeza de la tierra,
y no gime y suspira
y rompe lo que encierra
el alma, y de estos bienes la destierra?

Aquí vive el contento,
aquí reina la paz; aquí asentado
en rico y alto asiento
está el amor sagrado
de glorias y deleites rodeado.

Inmensa hermosura
aquí se muestra toda; y resplandece
clarísima luz pura,
que jamás anochece;
eterno primavera aquí florece.

¡Oh campos verdaderos!
¡oh prados con verdad frescos y amenos,
riquísimos mineros!
¡Oh deleitosos senos,
repuestos valles de mil bienes llenos!

The grave Spanish poet of the Counter-Reformation is more Christian in his inspiration than Du Bellay; he resembles rather Desportes. In the beyond of the Idea the center is the enthroned figure of "Sacred Love," surrounded by a court of allegories. But what is of main interest for us is that, while Du Bellay suggests by his *la*'s the acceleration of the flight toward Heaven, the Spanish poet evokes no flight, but a quiet raising of the eyes toward the immobile world of stars above us. The five *aquí*'s do not open up so many new vistas, each superposing itself on the other; they do not point to a crescendo of ascent. The last two even appear at quite inconspicuous places in the sentence. Fray Luís excels (and here he differs from Desportes) in the baroque, sensuous description of the wonders of the other world. His beyond is "inmensa hermosura [que] se muestra toda," immeasurable beauty revealed in its totality; it has infinite material extension. And in the last stanza there is even revealed a dimension of sidereal depth in that heavenscape full of deep valleys and rich mines. Fray Luís is more interested in the objective content of the ideal vision (which he visualizes with Miltonian sensuousness) than in the subjective experience of attaining it.

In another poem, addressed to Felipe Ruíz, Fray Luís again treats the cosmological vision of the beyond given by Boethius. He starts with a cry of nostalgia and disillusionment: *When* will I be able to free myself from the prison of this earth and to contemplate in Heaven pure truth unveiled? And he continues with a lengthy enumeration of all that he hopes to see: the sources and principles of all movement in the cosmos, and God in his shining chariot in the midst of the clouds, terrifying man by his flash of lightning—a clear reminiscence of Plato's phrase Ζεύς, ἐλαύνων πτηνὸν ἅρμα . . . διακοσμῶν πάντα, which underlies Boethius' lines (IV, 1, *metrum* 1): "et volucrem currum stabilis regit, Rerum coruscus arbiter." The whole poem of fourteen stanzas is held together by the verb in the future, *veré*, repeated seven times. I quote only the last stanza:

> Veré sin movimiento
> en la más alta esfera las moradas
> del gozo y del contento,
> de oro y de luz labradas,
> de espíritus dichosos habitadas.

In this stanza, which as to content corresponds to the *aquí*-stanzas of Fray Luís' "Noche serena," the *aquí*, which was already somewhat subdued in that poem, is entirely missing, but is in a sense replaced throughout the whole poem by the anaphoric repetition of *veré* (the future that carries conviction—"I shall see," not the conditional of Lamartine). And this insistence on the manifold sights that will greet the eye is particularly felicitous in a poem so largely given over to description. Fray Luís' baroque version of the Christian-Platonic beyond is pluralistic and pictorial, not monistic and linear as was that of the classicist Du Bellay, who led us to the highest rung of the hierarchic ladder, *the* Idea. It was because of his delight in plenitude that Luís de León, in a poem addressed to a contemporary musician, Francisco Salinas, praising the Christian-Pythagorean world harmony and the concert of the stars in the night sky, came only secondarily to add what was to be the most beautiful passage of the poem, the stanza on God the Harpist (cf. Amado Alonso, *NRFE*, IV, 391). He was so much concerned with depicting the *mar de dulzura*, the sea of sweetness in which the soul drowns intoxicated by harmony, that, in the first draft of his poem, he could forget the monotheistic Creator.[15a]

Returning from our discussion of the *hic, ivi, là, aquí-topos* in Latin

[15a] On the indebtedness of Fray Luís to Boethius see T. E. May and E. Sarmiento in *MLN*, XLIX (1954), 184. Marcel Bataillon in *Homenaje a Archer M. Huntington* (1952), pp. 42 f. quotes lines of Antonio Villegas (1565) such as:

> "El amor nace en *el cielo*
> *de aquella divina Idea;*
> *allí* se engendra y recrea
> y *de allí* lueve en el cielo . . ."

and Neo-Latin literature to the two Romance poems with which we are mainly concerned, we are now able to visualize the manner of working of Bernardino Daniello and of Du Bellay. The former condensed in his sonnet the essence of the philosophical meditations of Boethius, just as Boethius himself in one of his hymns did with Plato's *Timaeus*—the process called "contamination." But Daniello, unlike Fray Luís de León, omitted the cosmological speculations of Boethius on which the ancient scholar's meditations were based. On the other hand, he combined passages from other sources with lines lifted from Boethius.[16] The contrast between things earthly and heavenly is Biblical (Ps. 90: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past"). *Visco mondan* is obviously a paraphrase of the Biblical *limus* (clay) from which Adam was formed. The double question, "alma, che fai? perchè ti piace . . .?" is a reflection of a passage in the *Somnium Scipionis* in which the younger Scipio, seeing his ancestors in a dream, addresses to himself the two questions full of nostalgia for the beyond: "Quid moror in terris? Quin huc ad vos venire propero?"

In contrast to Desportes, who was satisfied with *translating* the Daniello poem literally (with very few interpolations from other sources), Du Bellay *paraphrased* the poem of Daniello, whose condensation of Boethian subject matter he respected, but he went back both to Boethius' text and to Boethius' source, the *Phaedrus*, thus offering *contaminatio* of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. He went back to Boethius' text, as is shown by the expression in line 8, "l'aele bien empanée," in which the now obsolete word *empané* is a pious reminder of "pennae volucres"; and to the *Phaedrus*, as is shown by his introduction of the Epiphany of the Idea through ἀνάμνησις, which entailed the

[16] Merrill's statement (p. 41) that Daniello's sonnet is "an echo" of Petrarch's Sonnet 355 goes too far:

> "O tempo, o ciel volubil che fuggendo
> Inganni i ciechi e miseri mortali,
> O dí veloci piú che vento e strali,
> Or ab experto vostre frodi intendo.
> Ma scuso voi e me stesso riprendo:
> Ché Natura a volar v'aperse l'ali,
> A me diede occhi; et io pur ne' miei mali
> Li tenni, onde vergogna e dolor prendo.
> E sarebbe ora, et è passata omai,
> Di rivoltarli in piú secura parte . . ."

While we are ready to acknowledge Daniello's verbal indebtedness to Petrarch as concerns the expression "venti e strali" and the rhyme "mali, strali, mortali, ali," Daniello's basic idea of the "wings of the soul" comes directly from Boethius. Petrarch's sonnet, too, is derived from Boethius' poems (especially the motif of nostalgia for freedom from the change and deception of time reflects Boethius). But in one regard he has introduced a new element; with him it is not the soul of man that is given wings, but time. The soul is given eyes, for contemplation of truth; so that, while the basic idea of Boethius is preserved, his symbol has been altered.

replacement of the Stoic hatred of this world (Boethius: "terras perosa despicit," Stanza 1 of IV, 1, *metrum* 1) by a philosophy of συνδεσμός that sees in this world adumbrations of the other world "l'Idée de la beauté, qu'en ce monde j'adore"). And, the most important feature, Du Bellay breathed life into the poem by means of a rhythm which enables the reader to relive the poet's experience of the ecstatic vision. It is only with Du Bellay that the "velox mens," the "volucres pennae," of Boethius have come alive. Although Du Bellay used the same sonnet form as Daniello, we have the impression that much more content has been pressed into the French poet's fourteen lines. This impression is due to the difference between a poem offering only a condensation of material and one which adds to this an inner organization.

Attempting now to formulate the result of our analysis, we see that our *direct observation*, made without any consideration of the sources, the observation about the rhythmical organization of Du Bellay's Sonnet 113, is revealed *after* our investigation of the sources to apply *exclusively* to that poem. In no source or parallel (with the exception of the passage from Lamartine, which is a pastiche of Du Bellay) have we found the particular rhythmical device of the latter, the anaphora of progression and ascension (Boethius knows only the anaphora of insistency). I may confess that I made the observation about the anaphora of ascension thirty years ago (in my *Stilstudien* II), while only recently have I studied Plato and Boethius as sources of our sonnet. It is not singular or, in itself, surprising that an observation of a particular artistic device made by the direct examination of a text should later be revealed, by investigation of sources, to be *distinctive* of that text, perhaps *unique* in world literature. The critic would not have been struck by a certain detail in a text, were it not peculiarly convincing in this and only this context, if it did not appear as though consubstantial with this text, and impress us as a *locus classicus* not diluted into a *locus communis*. If our investigation of the literary sources of the "Sonnet of the Idea" has been ultimately disappointing and anticlimactic, it has at least served to prove beyond doubt the uniqueness, if not in content, at least in poetic form, of that sonnet.

A final remark concerning the history of human emotions may be in order; if Du Bellay (and before him, of course, Dante[17]) could give us

[17] Dante, *Par.*, II, 19:

"La concreata e perpetua sete
Del deiforme regno cen portava
Veloci, quasi come il ciel vedete.
Beatrice in suso, ed io in lei guardava;
E forse in tanto, in quanto un quadrel posa,
E vola, e dalla noce si dischiava,
Giunto mi vidi ... [to the moon]."

Dante renders the miracle of the flight not by rhythm, but by a simile.

the physical illusion of flying, this must mean that poetry is able to anticipate physical experiences which will be tested only centuries later. Du Bellay, in his native Anjou, knew how it feels to fly long before the Wright brothers actually flew at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Man's soul flew toward the Platonic idea or the Christian Heaven long before the experience of the human body in a plane materialized. Let us glance at the description of an actual plane flight written by the aviator Saint-Exupéry in 1931, in his book *Vol de Nuit* (Chap. XVI; in this case it was the flight to death of a pilot):

Il monta, en corrigeant mieux les remous, grâce aux repères qu'offraient les étoiles. Leur aimant pâle l'attirait. Il avait peiné si longtemps, à la poursuite d'une lumière, qu'il n'aurait plus lâché la plus confuse. Riche d'une lueur d'auberge, il aurait tourné jusqu' à la mort, autour de ce signe dont il avait faim. Et voici qu'il montait vers des champs de lumière.

Il s'élevait peu à peu, en spirale, dans le puits qui s'était ouvert, et se refermait au-dessous de lui. Et les nuages perdaient, à mesure qu'il montait, leur boue d'ombre, ils passaient contre lui, comme des vagues de plus en plus pures et blanches. Fabien émergea.

Sa surprise fut extrême: la clarté était telle qu'elle l'éblouissait. Il dut, quelques secondes, fermer les yeux. Il n'aurait jamais cru que les nuages, la nuit, pussent éblouir. Mais la pleine lune et toutes les constellations les changeaient en vagues rayonnantes.

L'avion avait gagné d'un seul coup, à la seconde même où il émergeait, un calme qui semblait extraordinaire. Pas une houle ne l'inclinait. Comme une barque qui passe la digue, il entrait dans les eaux réservées. Il était pris dans une part de ciel inconnue et cachée comme la baie des îles bienheureuses. La tempête, au-dessous de lui, formait un autre monde de trois mille mètres d'épaisseur, parcouru de refales, de trombes d'eau, d'éclairs, mais elle tournait vers les astres une face de cristal et de neige.

Fabien pensait avoir gagné des limbes étranges, car tout devenait lumineux, ses mains, ses vêtements, ses ailes... Il circulait un lait de lumière, dans lequel baignait l'équipage... mille bras obscurs l'avaient lâché. On avait dénoué ses liens, comme ceux d'un prisonnier qu'on laisse marcher seul, un temps, parmi les fleurs... Il errait parmi des étoiles accumulées avec la densité d'un trésor...

The phrases suggesting "attraction by the magnets of the stars," "quest for pure light," "a peace that passes understanding," "fields of light," "happy isles," "limbos of strange magic," "liberation from prison chains," "the far-flung treasure of the stars," even "boue d'ombre," "slime of shadow," reminding us of "visco mondan"—all these expressions,[18] however appropriate they may be to the sensations of the modern aviator, are *topoi*, chosen with exquisite taste by a writer as much at home in world literature as in modern technology, from the stock of Platonic, Dantean, and Renaissance cosmological (or mythological) poetry. It is as though modern physical experience found no difficulty in molding itself into old poetic patterns, or rather as though, to a great

[18] These English expressions are taken from the translation by Stuart Gilbert (New York, 1932).

extent, new practical experiences of today were only *renewed* poetic experiences, *preshaped* experiences several millenia old.[19]

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[19] M. Poulet has called my attention to a poem by Pontus de Tyard (in his *Erreurs amoureuses*, 1549, contemporary with *L'Olive*) entitled "Disgrace," in which a movement contrary to that of Du Bellay's sonnet may be observed—a movement from the heights of the Idea to the depths of disappointment. In each of the ten tercets the downfall of all hopes is suggested, e.g., Stanza 1:

"La *haute Idée* à mon univers mere
Si *hautement* de nul jamais comprise
M'est a present tenebreuse Chimere . . ."

or rhymes such as "le ciel qui fut mon haut Ciel Empyrée—sa force empirée."

In *Muncker-Festschrift* (1916) Fritz Strich compares a seventeenth-century German poem by Weckherlin with its source in a poem by Ronsard:

"Ihr Augen, die ihr mich mit einem Blick und Blitz
Scharpf oder süß nach Lust könt strafen und belohnen;
O liebliches Gestirn, Stern, deren Liecht und Hitz
Kan, züchtigend den Stolz, der Züchtigen verschonen:
Und ihr, der Lieb Werkzeug, Kundschafter unsrer Witz,
Augbrauen, ja vielmehr Triumfbogen, nein, Kronen,
Derunter Lieb und Zucht in überschönem Sitz
Mit brauner Klarheit Schmuck erleuchtet leuchtend wohnen!
Wer recht kan eure Form, Farb, Wesen, Würckung, Kraft,
Der kan der Engeln Stand, Schein, Schönheit, Thun und Gehen,
Der kan der wahren Lieb Gewalt und Eigenschaft,
Der Schönheit Schönheit selbs, der Seelen Freud und Flehen,
Und der Glückseligkeit und Tugenden Freundschaft,
In Euch (der Natur Kunst besehend) wol verstehen."

"Ces deux yeux bruns, deux flambeaux de ma vie,
Dessus les miens réspandans leur clarté,
Ont arresté ma jeune liberté,
Pour la damner en prison asservie.
De ces yeux bruns ma raison fut ravie,
Si qu'esbloui de leur grande beauté,
Opiniastre à garder loyauté,
Autres yeux voir depuis je n'eus envie.
D'autres esperons mon tyran ne me poind;
Autres pensers en moy ne logent point,
Ni autre idole en mon cœur je n'adore;
Ma main ne sçait cultiver autre nom,
Et mon papier n'est esmaillé si non
De ses beautéz que ma plume colore."

Professor Strich emphasizes the "baroque" features of the German poem as opposed to the "classicism" of Ronsard, the "swelling" and "intensification" which distinguish it from the model. I should like to add that Weckherlin, without mentioning the motif of flight, has introduced into his enumeration a rhythm suggestive of the flight of the soul toward Heaven as its goal, in a manner consonant with the "sonnet de l'Idée"; we soar with the poet toward the angels, true love, the idea of beauty ("der Schönheit Schönheit selbs"), joy, bliss, the virtues; and the last line is also parallel to Du Bellay's, insofar as the lady of the brown eyes is declared to be a work of art wrought by Nature, that is, an embodiment of the Idea in this world.

RILKE, MICHELANGELO, AND THE *GESCHICHTEN VOM LIEBEN GOTT*

ROBERT J. CLEMENTS

A FULL assessment of the spirit which infuses Rilke's thirteen *Geschichten vom lieben Gott* has never been undertaken. In fact, the copious studies, essays, and memoirs which caused Gide to observe as far back as February 1927, "Tout a été dit sur Rainer Maria Rilke," have been less concerned with these somewhat enigmatic tales than with the other works. Despite the fact that they were written on seven successive nights in a single sustained impulse, they are not entirely homogeneous in spirit. Certainly, harmony is lent throughout by the reappearance of a gentle, anthropomorphic God of an enlightened sort who is baffled by that comportment of mankind which baffles the narrator himself. The successive titles of this collection announced God as a unifying force ("Du, mein Gott, wer sonst!"). Yet within this general and harmonizing spirit there is heterogeneity provided by "seltsame, oft bizarr wirkende Vergleiche und Bilder"[1] which seem capricious inventions and reminiscences. It is our intention to identify the spirit and source of many of these passages. This spirit, implicit from the very first legend and finally explicit in the eighth, is that of Michelangelo Buonarroti.

Two contrary formative forces operated on the composition of the *Geschichten* in November 1899, the same forces apparent in *Vom mönchischen Leben*, dating from the same season and year. Between late March and early May 1898, Rilke made his first trip to Florence via Arco and Viareggio; he had been to Venice in the spring of the previous year. In April, May, and June of 1899 he made his first trip to Moscow, a trip which he felt would bring new depths of religiosity to his writing, as he wrote to Frieda von Bülow, and one which would complement his stay in Florence.[2] It was at the very moment when, with Lou Andreas-Salomé, he was reconciling and synthesizing his intensive study of Russia and Russian with his specific study of the Italian Renaissance and when the memories of his two recent trips were freshest that Rilke wrote these "children's stories." Three of them were actually set in Russia and three in Italy.

The trip to Florence—to the Cappella Medicea, the Bargello, the Casa Buonarroti, and the rest—brought Rilke face to face with the plastic works of Michelangelo. His description of the *Deposizione* in the

[1] Albert Schäfer, *Die Gottesanschauung Rainer Maria Rilkes* (Würzburg, 1938), p. 38.

[2] Rilke, *Briefe und Tagebücher aus der Frühzeit* (Leipzig, 1931), p. 16.

Duomo (which he, like his contemporaries, called the *Pietà*) as a *non finito* in "Von einem, der die Steine belauscht" came out of personal observation, as did his awareness of Michelangelo's absorption in the nude figure. Yet, as attested by the *rapprochements* we shall identify in the *Geschichten*, it was less the marbles, canvases, and frescoes of Michelangelo which absorbed Rilke in 1899 than the mind and temperament of the Florentine artist as revealed in his writings and recorded statements. For in those writings, particularly the *Rime* and the *Lettere*, Rilke found a fascinating fellow craftsman whose passionate temperament, whose unbending devotion to his art, and whose Christian-Platonic mysticism transcending penury and misunderstanding all struck a responsive chord in his own troubled being. Yet, of all the scholars and dilettantes represented in Walter Ritzer's *Rilke Bibliographie*, none has explored the ascendancy of Buonarroti over René Rilke.

In 1899, for the first time, it was possible for Rilke to have the five major sources for Michelangelo's thought at his disposal in readily available editions, editions which have never been superseded. That year, moreover, initiated a period when is was almost impossible for a young intellectual in Germany or Austria, especially if he had a reading knowledge of Italian, to avoid becoming acquainted with Michelangelo. In 1899 a generous *Sammlung* of letters to Michelangelo was brought out in Berlin by Carl Frey. The monumental Milanesi edition of the artist's letters had been available since 1875. The final volume of Milanesi's edition of Vasari's *Vite* had appeared in 1882, and in 1887 Frey reissued in Berlin the biographies of Michelangelo by Vasari and Condivi. In 1897 Frey published in Berlin his definitive *Dichtungen des Michelagniolo Buonarroti*, whose readings were to be used later by Rilke in his own *Dichtungen des Michelangelo*. It should be added parenthetically that in 1899 the few extant German translations of Michelangelo were disparaged by Rilke as "ein Spiel kindischer Reimereien."[3] He excepted from this condemnation only the few pieces which had been translated by Hermann Grimm, like Frey a professor of art at the University of Berlin. Granted the opportune appearance of these four sources, the *Rime*, the *Lettere*, and the *Vite* of Vasari and Condivi, what access did Rilke have to the fifth major reservoir of Buonarrotian thought, those dialogues in which Francisco de Hollanda recorded so many of Michelangelo's pronouncements on art? On the eve of the composition of the *Geschichten*, Vasconcellos published in Vienna De Hollanda's *Vier Gespräche über die Malerei* (1899), with facing German and Portuguese texts.

That Rilke preferred to use the Italian versions of the sources that were also available in German one gathers from his statement to Lou

[3] Rilke, *Briefe* (Wiesbaden, 1950), II, 292.

Andreas-Salomé that he knew only the Italian text of the *Rime*.[4] This is unexpectedly confirmed, moreover, in two verses of the first part of the *Stundenbuch*, also dating from late 1899:

> Das waren Tage Michelangelos
> Von denen ich in fremden Büchern las.[5]

These sources, all of them recently available to him and the vehicles of a Michelangelo revival, are reflected in varying degrees in several of the *Geschichten vom lieben Gott*.

Perhaps still conscious of Michelangelo at that moment when he set down his pen, exhausted as though he had been wielding a chisel and mallet, Rilke signaled in his *Tagebuch* the completion of the "Buch vom lieben Gott und Anderes" with a free-verse acknowledgment of the divine forces which had buoyed him up night after night:

> die nicht von meiner müden Hand sind. Die
> verraten, daß ich selber Hand bin, Eines,
> der mit mir wundersame Dinge tut.[6]

It is the same acknowledgment which Michelangelo on several occasions makes to the God who guides his hand. On one of these occasions he expressed himself in a sonnet which Rilke was shortly to translate:

> se 'l mie rozzo martello i duri sassi
> Forma d'uman aspecto or questo or quello,
> Dal ministro, che 'l guida iscorgie e tiello,
> prendendo il moto, ua con gli altrui passi.[7]
>
> Wenn hier mein grober Hammer den und den
> härtesten Stein in Menschenhaftes wandelt,
> hat er den Schwung von dem, der mit ihm handelt
> und muß mit eines andern Schritten gehn.[8]

God as the *sommo fattore*, the actual force behind the "pronta mano" of the artist is an idea conveyed *passim* in Michelangelo's writings.[9]

If the spirit of Botticelli infuses many of the early *Mädchenbilder*, it is Michelangelo who is evoked directly or indirectly in six of the tales of God.

In the first tale, "Das Märchen von den Händen Gottes," the narrator announces at the outset that he knows something about these hands. Indeed, they were a prominent motif throughout *Vom mönchischen Leben*, completed a few weeks earlier. Rilke leads us up to the subject as though he were enumerating the first histories of the Sistine Ceiling preceding the *Creazione di Adamo*: "Also der liebe Gott begann, wie

[4] Rilke, *Briefe* (Leipzig, 1933), III, 190.
[5] Rilke, *Gesammelte Werke* (Leipzig, 1927), II, 193.
[6] Rilke, *Briefe und Tagebücher aus der Frühzeit* (Leipzig, 1931), p. 231.
[7] Carl Frey, ed., *Dichtungen des Michelagniolo Buonarroti* (Berlin, 1897), p. 106.
[8] Rilke, *Dichtungen des Michelangelo* (Wiesbaden, 1951), p. 42.
[9] Frey, *Dichtungen*, pp. 4, 228 and *passim*.

bekannt, seine Arbeit, indem er die Erde machte, diese vom Wasser unterschied, und Licht befahl."[10] The rapidity of this creating ("in bewundernswerter Geschwindigkeit") impresses Rilke, as it impressed Michelangelo in his sonnet, "Colui che fece et non di cosa alcuna" (in Rilke's *Dichtungen* this becomes "Der, welcher, nicht aus irgend einem Dinge").[11] Rilke explains that this rapidity is possible only after long and deep planning; everything must be ready in the head before the hand can execute. This is a basic tenet of Michelangelo, who held that the mind must resolve the problem of the *concetto* with deliberation, so that the final operation may be (and appear to be) rapid and effortless. This Michelangelo confided to Francisco de Hollanda as a crucial trade secret: "Was man mit größtem Eifer erstreben und mit dem größten Aufwand von Arbeit und Studium, im Schweiße seines Angesichts zu erreichen suchen soll, ist dasjenige, daß, was man mit allergrößter Mühe schafft, so aussehe, als wäre es schnell, fast ohne Anstrengung, ja mit größter Leichtigkeit hingeworfen."[12]

God is completely indifferent to external nature and takes no interest in creating trees. His disdain is reminiscent of Michelangelo's, as explained by Vasari in a well-known passage: "Ha Michelagnolo atteso solo, come s'è detto altrove, alla perfezione dell'arte; perchè nè paesi vi sono, nè alberi . . . come quegli che forse non voleva abbassare quel suo grande ingegno in simil cose."[13] When God starts to make animals, He grows more interested; but He becomes completely absorbed in the making of man. The lack of interest in trees and animals is translated into the first histories of the Sistine Ceiling. Angels flutter around God, capable of fright, like the *putti* on the Sistine *Creazioni*. God turns the completion of the sculpturing of man over to His hands, and sight is no longer an agent of the formative process.[14] We are thus guided to the *Creazione di Adamo*, where the hands impart life to man. The distinct functions of the mind and the hands were explicit in Michelangelo: "le mani operano e l'occhio giudica."[15] Man, however, slips out of God's hands and falls—the theme of three of the remaining five panels. God thereupon disowns his hands and even today, unless the hands have the succor of God, they are as powerless as art without nature. "Ohne Gott gibt es keine Vollendung."[16] This is a lesson Michelangelo will

[10] Rilke, *Geschichten vom lieben Gott* (Leipzig, 1936), p. 11.

[11] Frey, *Dichtungen*, p. 4; Rilke, *Dichtungen*, p. 32.

[12] De Hollanda, *Vier Gespräche über die Malerei* (Vienna, 1899), p. 121.

[13] Vasari, *Le Vite* (Florence, 1881), VII, 216.

[14] *Geschichten*, p. 15. Are these detached hands of independent will, to be exploited so fully by Cocteau, part of that unspecified debt which Cocteau acknowledged to "le secrétaire de M. Rodin"? (And does his *angélisme* derive from the angelism of Rilke?)

[15] Vasari, *Le Vite*, VII, 270.

[16] *Geschichten*, p. 16. The idea that God is needed for the completion of man's works had recently been introduced in the *Stundenbuch*, where the efforts of the

learn bitterly in the eighth tale. The notion of the hands proving inadequate to the task when the mind is inattentive was enunciated by Michelangelo: "e' non si può lavorare con le mani una cosa, e col ciervello una altra," or again, "si dipinge col ciervello e non con le mani."[17]

At this point Rilke proceeds to one of the dominant ideas of Michelangelo's aesthetics—the supremacy of the nude over the clothed figure. After a moment of eternity (a thousand calendar years) God looks down and sees a great milling throng of over a million. "Aber sie waren alle schon in Kleidern ... so bekam Gott einen ganz falschen und sehr schlechten Begriff von den Menschen." Michelangelo's specific condemnation of clothing Rilke may have found in the newly published *Vier Gespräche*: "Wo aber ist ein Verstand so stumpfsinning, daß er nicht begriffe, daß ein Menschenfuß edler ist als ein Schuh? Und die menschliche Haut schöner als ein Lammfell, mit dem man jene etwa bekleidet?"[18] Fortunately, there are a few people left in the world to remind God of the beauty of the nude figure: "Einfach die Kinder und dann und wann auch diejenigen Leute, welche malen, Gedichte schreiben, bauen," three pursuits in which Michelangelo distinguished himself. Various of Buonarroti's *Rime* ("Mentre c'alla belta, ch'i' uiddi im prima," "Veggio nel tuo bel uiso, Signior mio," "Per ritornar la donde uenne fora") propagate the Neoplatonic belief that the human body constitutes one of three levels at which God is mirrored, the supreme perfection of form, and a visible manifestation of "quel pietoso fonte, onde siam tucti" ("Gnadenquell, aus welchem alle stammen").[19]

This exaltation of the nude figure furnished the answer to the question implicit in the title of the third tale, "Warum der liebe Gott will, daß es arme Leute gibt." God continues to regret that man clothes himself so fully that He can no longer see what man is like. The loss of the contours of the body within the clothing ("daß man sah, es konnte kein Körper mehr darunter sein")[20] which God regrets was equally intolerable to Michelangelo. The most perfect example of his rebellion against raiment was one which Rilke had recently observed—the figure of Giuliano de' Medici, with the transparent coat of mail.

The principal episode of this third tale concerns the erection of a nude statue of Truth in a public square. God finds the modeler of this statue, an irritable man, kneading clay and complaining that he should never have become an artist: "Ich wollte, ich wär Schuster geworden. Da sitzt man und plagt sich."[21] His complaint is a paraphrase of Michel-

"Knappen, Jünger, Meister" require the final collaboration of God: "Aber wer kann dich vollenden, du Dom ... ?" *Gesammelte Werke*, II, pp. 191, 184.

[17] *Le Lettere de Michelangelo Buonarroti*, ed. Milanesi (Florence, 1875), pp. 450, 489.

[18] De Hollanda, *Vier Gespräche*, p. 117.

[19] Frey, *Dichtungen*, p. 53; Rilke, *Dichtungen*, p. 40.

[20] *Geschichten*, p. 39.

[21] *Ibid.*

angelo's outcry in a letter: "Meglio m'era nei primi anni che io mi fussi messo a fare zolfanelli che io non sarei in tanta passione."[22] At this point the reminiscence of Michelangelo becomes most keen. The iracund sculptor (and testimony abounds concerning the short temper of Michelangelo) works day and night to execute his allegorical figure, only to have the city fathers and other eminences decide that the pudenda should be covered. This scandalized reaction is a vivid evocation of Michelangelo's struggle to protect his nude figures from *braghettoni* —from dignitaries of the Church and Counter-Reformational bodies down to the vulgar Aretino, who wrote a "lettre de Tartuffe" (Romain Rolland's phrase) charging that the figures of the Sistine Chapel would be more fitting to a bordello. "Der liebe Gott verstand nicht, weshalb, so laut fluchte der Künstler." Loud indeed was Buonarroti's first reaction when he was told to his astonishment and irritation that the Pope wanted to put loincloths on the nudities of the *Giudizio universale*: "Dite al papa che questa è piccola faccenda, e che facilmente si può acconciare; che acconci egli il mondo!"[23] The thematic proposition that the poor and unclothed are the most virtuous people and the most beloved of God reminds one of a passage in Vasari. When Pope Julius found the Sistine ceiling "poor," Michelangelo retorted that primitive men and religious men could indeed appear plain and bare. "Padre Santo, in quel tempo gli uomini non portavano addosso oro, e quegli che son dipinti non furon mai troppo ricchi, ma santi uomini, perchè gli sprezzarono le ricchezze."[24]

The slim little tale draws quickly to a close. The schoolmaster, to whom it is being narrated, fails to understand this enlightened approach to Biblical materials and objects: "Zunächst finde ich es unrecht, religiöse, besonders biblische Stoffe frei und eigenmächtig zu gebrauchen." This is the very complaint which Giulio da Fabriano, one of the loudest mouthpieces of the Counter-Reformation, lodged against Michelangelo's paintings, and which was to have its echoes, incidentally, in the charges against Paolo Veronese before the Holy Tribunal. It is a counterpart of the feeling of Rilke's monk, in an unpublished passage of the *Stundenbuch*, that Michelangelo and his fellows were blasphemous in their endeavor to represent God.[25]

The titular hero of the eighth tale, "Von einem, der die Steine belauscht," is Michelangelo. This tripartite story is composed of three episodes in the life of the artist, two adapted from Vasari and all three growing out of an intimate understanding of Michelangelo's personal

[22] Milanesi, *Lettere*, p. 488.
[23] Vasari, *Le Vite*, VII, 240.
[24] *Ibid.*, VII, 178.
[25] See Ruth Mövius, *Rainer Maria Rilkes Stundenbuch* (Leipzig, 1937), pp. 209-215.

aesthetics, based on the *concetto* as a predetermined, living, and growing art form.

At the outset the narrator returns to the theme of anthropocentrism introduced in the first tale. God is much less interested in external nature than in man. "Der Frühling, den Gott bemerken soll, darf nicht in Bäumen und auf Wiesen bleiben, er muß irgendwie in den Menschen mächtig werden."[26] We have already observed that this attitude of the master sculptor was that of Buonarroti, who advised Vasari to use nude figures rather than *fogliami* as decorative motifs.[27] Michelangelo's preference for nude figures in a "terra inanis et vacua" leads him to censure the Flemings for painting "patches, masonries, plants in the fields, shadows of trees, rivers, and bridges, all of which they call landscapes."[28] Like the Aristotelian theorists of his time, Michelangelo saw "man in action" as the only valid subject of painting and sculpture, as well as of tragedy and epic.

In a baroque setting God and the angels hover over Renaissance Italy and watch the restless hands of Michelangelo, at first seeming folded as if in prayer ("aber das Gebet, welches ihnen entquoll, drängte sie weit auseinander"), cast a shadow over the peninsula. God does not resent this shadow. Indeed, He disregards the prayers of others which rise up heavenward to Him, and views Michelangelo's creative power as an offering to Him. The real-life Michelangelo did indeed feel that his exercise of painting, sculpture, and architecture was a service dedicated to God.[29] God then looks more closely over the shoulder of the craftsman. He observes that the hands seem to be listening to the stone they are working and gives a start. Do the stones themselves have souls? Apparently hearing a faint voice from the stone, the hands set again to fashioning it.

A major premise of Michelangelo's Neoplatonism was that art forms co-exist in the world of soul and the world of matter. It fostered his belief that living figures were sealed within marbles ("gardiens du contour pur"), a belief expressed in several poems known to Rilke, as his *Dichtungen* show:

> Si come per leuar, Donna, si pone
> In pietra alpestra e dura
> Una uiua figura,
> Che là piu crescie, u' piu la pietra scema.[30]

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[26] *Geschichten*, p. 101.
[27] Vasari, *Le Vite*, VII, 226.
[28] De Hollanda, *Vier Gespräche*, p. 29.
[29] Thus, when Michelangelo became architect-in-chief of St. Peter's, he refused an extra emolument from Paul III, stating that he was agreeing to serve in this new role only for his love of God.
[30] Frey, *Dichtungen*, p. 90.

So wie, indem man abnimmt, langsam nur
innen im harten Berggestein sich findet
ein Niederschlag lebendiger Figur,
der mehr erwächst, je mehr der Stein verschwindet.[31]

Once it is accepted that the living *concetto* in the stone has a soul, it is easy to attribute a voice to it. This element of Michelangelo's thinking was so apparent to Rilke that he translated all three poems which are allegedly spoken by the living marbles. These are the stanza spoken by the *Notte* of the Medici Chapel, the dialogue between the *Giorno* and the *Notte*, and the plaint of the headstones on the sepulcher of Cecchino de' Bracci:

Caro m'è 'l sonno et piu l'esser di sasso[32]
Schlaf ist mir lieb, doch über alles preise[33]

El Di e la Nocte parlano e dichono[34]
Es sprechen der Tag und die Nacht und sagen[35]

Dagli alti monti e d'una gra' ruina[36]
Von Bergen, wo der Felsen im Verein[37]

God, still startled by the faint voice in the stone, cries out: "Michelangelo, wer ist im Stein?" The answer comes up, "Du, mein Gott, wer denn sonst. Aber ich kann nicht zu dir."

The idea of Michelangelo's trying to attain God can be read in many of the *Rime* which Rilke put into German. God's unattainability for Michelangelo had occupied Rilke a few weeks before, while writing *Vom mönchischen Leben*:

Nur Gott bleibt über seinem Willen weit:
da liebt er ihn mit seinem hohen Hasse
für diese Unerreichbarkeit.[38]

After Michelangelo has answered that God Himself is in the stone, the Deity becomes conscious of this, in a passage which could have been written only by someone familiar with Michelangelo's *concetto* theory:

Und da fühlte Gott, daß er auch im Steine sei, und es wurde ihm ängstlich und enge. Der ganze Himmel war nur ein Stein, und er war mitten drin eingeschlossen und hoffte auf die Hände Michelangelos, die ihn befreien würden, und er hörte sie kommen, aber noch weit.[39]

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[31] Rilke, *Dichtungen*, p. 7.
[32] Frey, *Dichtungen*, p. 126.
[33] Rilke, *Dichtungen*, p. 5.
[34] Frey, *Dichtungen*, p. 14.
[35] Rilke, *Gesammelte Werke*, VI, 225. Omitted in the Insel edition of *Dichtungen des Michelangelo*.
[36] Frey, *Dichtungen*, p. 222.
[37] Rilke, *Dichtungen*, p. 60.
[38] Rilke, *Gesammelte Werke*, II, 194.
[39] *Geschichten*, p. 103.

If God is a conception to be created by masters and apprentices, as Rilke had written in the first part of the *Stundenbuch*,[40] it is meet that he should be freed (formed) by the sculptor laureate of Christendom.

The narrator shifts to the viewpoint of the sculptor, whose attention is now riveted upon a marble block in which his inner vision discerns the three figures of the *Deposizione* in the Florentine Duomo. It is no accident that Rilke selects this particular work to lend unity to his tale. For it is the one work in which both God and Michelangelo are incarnated, in the figures of Christ and Nicodemus, respectively. It serves as a transitional element between the concepts of God as a marmoreal art form, just introduced, and of Michelangelo as a similar art form, which closes the tale. That Nicodemus was a self-portrait, by the way, was known as far back as Vasari, and any native of Florence will assure you of the fact today. Seeing the three figures *in potenza* within the stone, Rilke's Michelangelo self-consciously echoes the most famous quatrain of the *Rime*: "Er dachte beständig: du bist nur ein kleiner Block, und ein anderer könnte in dir kaum einen Mensch finden . . ."

> Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto,
> Ch' un marmo solo in se non circonscriua
> Col suo souerchio, et solo à quello arriua
> La man, che ubbidisce all'intelletto.[41]

Then this recreated Michelangelo goes further than his archetype had ever gone, wondering why he may not lift an entire sleeping race out of a rock. In a sense, the painter of the Sistine frescoes, including the *Giudizio*, who applied this theory of the predetermined *concetti* to painting,[42] did bring an entire race out of the pigment which had enclosed them. In any case, Rilke's sculptor "sets free" the figures of the *Deposizione* with "broad strokes," the same broad strokes which impressed Cellini as the result of the "awesome furies which came over him as he worked."[43] But the surfaces of the *Deposizione* are purposely kept indistinct: "er löste nicht ganz die steinernen Schleier von ihren Gesichtern, als fürchtete er, ihre tiefe Traurigkeit könnte sich lähmend über seine Hände legen." This expedient of the stone veil to soften the outright depiction of pain is as old as the Greek artist who left a statue of Agamemnon unfinished, fearing his inability to translate the anguish of a father seeing his daughter sacrificed; in any case, Michelangelo's contemporaries Lomazzo and Dolce both mention his recourse to the "veil of art."[44]

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[40] Rilke, *Gesammelte Werke*, II, 191.

[41] Frey, *Dichtungen*, p. 89.

[42] Michelangelo even applied this theory to writing and poetry, finding style resident in the ink itself, in a sonnet ("Sicome nella penna e nell' inchiostro") translated by Rilke ("So wie drei Stile in der Feder sind").

[43] Cellini, *Due trattati* (Milan, 1811), p. 213.

[44] Lomazzo, *Trattato di pittura e scultura* (Rome, 1844), I, 47; Dolce, *Dialogo della pittura* (Florence, 1735), p. 242.

Michelangelo thereupon turns to other stones, and does not complete the figures which he finds in them. They would be most likely the *San Matteo*, the *Giorno*, and the *Prigioni*, all of which Rilke had undoubtedly seen in Florence. Rilke is now posing the problem of the *non finiti*, a problem which has troubled and attracted many art historians. Rilke offers his own explanation, advanced by no one else. Michelangelo does not finish a statue, "damit ihre Schönheit nicht ganz verraten sei."

The narrator now turns his attention to a well-known occasion in 1505 when Michelangelo was overseeing the quarrying of marbles at Carrara, seeking suitable blocks for the ill-fated tomb of Julius II.[45] He will cover the tomb with a "Geschlecht" of figures, obviously the many allegorical Victories, Captives, and so on. As Vasari and Condivi indicate, the master's eye fastens upon a high mountain peak within which his mind's eye seems to see a colossus taking form. As the image of the colossus grows, the initial impression of the mountain dies away: "Und Michelangelo fühlte seine Gestalt wachsen unter dem Einfluß dieses Blickes."

> L'inmagin dentro crescie, e quella cede
> Quasi uilmente e senza alcuna stima.[46]

Soon the sculptor feels that he, too, is growing in stature, just as Buonarroti was pictured as waxing "gigantengroß" in the *Stundenbuch*.[47] He looks down and sees the huts underfoot far below, like that giant described by Michelangelo:

> Vn gigante u'è ancor d'alteza tanta,
> Che da sua ochi noi qua giu non uede...
> Al sol aspira e l'alte torre pianta...[48]

> Ein Riese ist noch, über alles groß,
> uns unten hier sehn seine Augen nicht...
> Zur Sonne läßt er seine Türme los...[49]

Then Rilke knowledgeably describes the *furia* of Michelangelo's figures in a few well-chosen words. Of the colossus Michelangelo perceives in the mountain peak, he writes: "Es hatte einen wartenden Ausdruck, reglos und doch am Rande der Bewegung."[50] This is the renowned action-in-check of Buonarroti's statuary and painting, achieved through a carefully contrived exploitation of contrapposto and serpentine, on which he expressed himself to Marco da Siena.[51] Gratified at the indestructible unity promised by such a colossal statue, Michelangelo de-

[45] See Vasari, *Le Vite*, VII, 163; and Condivi, *Vita di Michelangiolo* (Florence, 1938), p. 61.
[46] Frey, *Dichtungen*, p. 24.
[47] Rilke, *Gesammelte Werke*, II, 193.
[48] Frey, *Dichtungen*, p. 58.
[49] Rilke, *Dichtungen*, p. 66.
[50] *Geschichten*, p. 105.
[51] Lomazzo, *Trattato*, I, 34-35; II, 87.

cides to accept the challenge of executing it ("Dich will ich vollenden") and turns back toward Florence, which in this fairy tale lies just around the corner. But God does not will it, and we have been forewarned in the first tale that "ohne Gott gibt es keine Vollendung."

That this memorable incident in Michelangelo's biography was lingering in Rilke's mind when he composed the first part of the *Stundenbuch* a few weeks before may be assumed from the poet's outcry to God therein:

> und hätt dich gebildet, wie ein Gigant
> dich bilden würde: als Berg ...[52]

As Buonarroti enters Florence, he sees a star over the tower of the Duomo, reminiscent of a legend of the Savonarolians to the effect that the sculptor saw a comet arched toward Florence.[53] Then the eighth tale races to a highly imaginative conclusion, for which we were subtly prepared by the introduction of Nicodemus above. Michelangelo suddenly begins to feel the *soverchio* (superfluous surrounding matter) of the city of Florence starting to encase him as he reaches the Porta Romana. The city blocks, his own house, his narrow room, and then his walls close in on him: "und es war, als kämpften sie mit seinen Übermaßen und zwängten ihn zurück in die alte, enge Gestalt. Und er duldete es. Er drückte sich in die Kniee und ließ sich formen von ihnen."

At this point God cries out to him, "Michelangelo, wer ist in dir?" And the artist, now reduced to one of his own *concetti*, like Nicodemus, answers, "Du, mein Gott, wer denn sonst." So God indeed must be the life force in artists who are at one with their creations and has been in them since He wished to have fashioned the *arca foederis*, the Ark of the Covenant.[54]

For the final Magnificat Rilke's gaze returns to the upper plane of the baroque stage setting where the limelights had originally been directed: God in triumph, the saints in their mitres and mantles, the choir of angels and cherubim, "wie mit Krügen voll glänzenden Quells unter den dürstenden Sternen umher, und es war der Himmel kein Ende."[55]

The application of the concept of the sealed-in art form as a living thing, enlarged to the point of considering God and Michelangelo as both artists and art forms themselves, makes a fanciful if complex theme for a short story. In the *Rime* Rilke found Michelangelo identifying various individuals as actual or potential art forms, *concetti*: Vittoria Colonna, Tommaso Cavalieri, himself. Since Michelangelo had taken a bolder stand than most Church painters on iconolatry and anthropo-

[52] Rilke, *Gesammelte Werke*, II, 188.
[53] "Una visione del Buonarroti," *Il Buonarroti*, IV (Apr. 1866), 103.
[54] De Hollanda, *Vier Gespräche*, p. 110.
[55] *Geschichten*, p. 106.

morphism, he did obviously view God as an art form. But the God-in-stone was the final and logical projection of the *concetto* theory whose "Unerreichbarkeit" held him, but not Rilke, back.

In turning out thirteen tales in the short span of seven nights, could Rilke fail to sense Michelangelo's presence throughout? That presence is not noticeable in the stories of direct Russian inspiration, "Wie der Verrat nach Rußland kam," "Wie der alte Timofei singend starb," "Das Lied von der Gerechtigkeit," and "Der fremde Mann," which were to demonstrate the new religious accents gained from the first trip to Russia. Neither Italy nor Russia figures in "Wie der Fingerhut dazu kam, der liebe Gott zu sein" or "Ein Märchen vom Tod." Appropriately enough, "Eine Szene aus dem Ghetto von Venedig" evokes Giorgione, Titian, and Tiepolo; there is no evocation of Michelangelo to remind us that it was in this ghetto that the Florentine stayed, to the consternation of the proper Venetians, when he first visited Venice.

Yet in that week of creation in November 1899 momentary snatches of his reading in Michelangelo returned. So, in "Der Bettler und das stolze Fräulein," the Florentine setting leads Rilke to a condemnation of crowded composition, which he sees as a corollary of the Renaissance desire to crowd as much as possible into one's lifetime. His ironic condemnation of this dense composition recalls to us that Michelangelo deplored this tendency: " . . . so fehlt daran in Wahrheit doch die rechte Kunst, das rechte Maß, und das rechte Verhältnis, sowie Auswahl und klare Verteilung im Raume und schließlich selbst Nerv und Substanz."[56] In this tale there is a direct reference to Michelangelo; the heroine is described as being "stolz wie ein Stein in den Händen Michelangelos,"[57] a factitious conceit not particularly Buonarrotian. In "Ein Verein aus einem dringenden Bedürfnis heraus" the theme is the foundation of an artist's colony, which has prompted Rilke scholars to a gratuitous and unlikely comparison with Worpswede. Three touches of Michelangelo's aesthetics reappear, more or less identifiable as such. The artist's known disinclination to talk about art, attested by De Hollanda, Giannotti, and others, is reflected in "Die drei Maler sprachen natürlich nicht von Kunst."[58] Michelangelo's belief in an artistic elect endowed at birth with an *intelletto* ("Nel parto mi fu data la bellezza")[59] seems implicit in the characterization: "es wirkliche Künstler waren, gewissermaßen von der Natur beabsichtigte . . ."[60] The working together of the eye and hand, a simple enough arrangement which had become a "principle" in Plotinus, was restated as a principle by

[56] De Hollanda, *Vier Gespräche*, p. 29.
[57] *Geschichten*, p. 155.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 137.
[59] Frey, *Dichtungen*, p. 99.
[60] Rilke, *Geschichten*, p. 137.

Michelangelo on several occasions.[61] and especially in his often quoted statement, "che bisognava avere le seste negli occhi e non in mano, perchè le mani operano e l'occhio giudica."[62] It is recalled when members of Rilke's art colony see style as the product of "den Blick, die Hand und wie alle die Dinge heißen, ohne welche ein Maler zwar leben, aber nicht malen kann."[63] In the final tale, "Eine Geschichte dem Dunkel erzählt," there seems no possible pretext to evoke Buonarroti; the tone of other stories has been abandoned; yet, when the narrator Georg asks his old friend Klara the name and profession of the man she has married, she replies, "Angelo ist Maler."[64]

It is uncritical and unhistorical to assert that the ascendancy of Rodin is felt in these stories, to conjecture, as an excellent student of Rilke has done recently, that "the divine sculptor of the stories may have been modelled on Rodin."[65] Rilke composed these stories almost three years before he met Rodin for the first time, and the strong influence was to occur later. Rodin's marble *Main de Dieu* dates from 1902, two years after the publication of the *Geschichten*. None of Rilke's letters or journals—nor the monograph on Rodin—would indicate an influence by Rodin as early as 1899, any more than do the *Geschichten* themselves, even though Rilke had been introduced to the work of Rodin through Lepsius in 1897. In 1899, Michelangelo, as thinker and poet much more than practitioner, exercised an ascendancy over Rainer Rilke and the intellectually alert of his generation. The poetic and philosophic side of the Florentine master was newly revealed in those documentary sources to which we have been referring the reader throughout this article.[66] Our inquiry would indicate that even at this moment Rilke had started to familiarize himself with and form preferences among those sonnets, madrigals, and *canzoni* on which he worked most intensely after 1914. If he failed to publish, for one reason or another,

[61] See R. J. Clements, "Mind, Eye, and Hand in Michelangelo's Poetry," *PMLA*, LXIX (1954), 324-336.

[62] Vasari, *Le Vite*, VII, 270.

[63] *Geschichten*, p. 140.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

[65] E. M. Butler, *Rainer Maria Rilke* (Cambridge, 1941), p. 101. This work, however, briefly supposes a strong and increasing Buonarrotian influence on Rilke, and suggests that this influence incited the heaven-storming page in his 1898 diary.

[66] Further evidence that Rilke was using these primary sources rather than Grimm's popular biography of Michelangelo, which reproduces fragments of the letters and the *Rime*, is supplied by a recently published letter of Rilke to Graf Mensdorff under date of Jan. 1, 1917: "... das schönste grundlegende Buch, das sein Leben erzählt, ist sicher das von Hermann Grimm, das Ihnen dringend empfohlen sei, das ich aber selbst leider nie gelesen habe. Die große italiänische Ausgabe der Gedichte, nach der ich übersetze, enthält einen ziemlich großen Apparat von Anmerkungen, mit dem ich mir helfe..." This could be only the edition of Frey. The letter quoted is reproduced in *Mesa*, IV (Spring 1952), 25-26, and was brought to my attention by my friend Professor Philip Shelley.

poems commonly used since his time to explain Michelangelo's aesthetics ("Per fido esemplo alla mia uocazione" and "Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto"), his absorption with the ethos and psyche of that artist made him translate Michelangelo's most intimate mystical revelations ("Giunta gia è 'l corso della uita mia," "Per qual mordace lima," "Non fur men lieti che turbati e tristi," etc.). One cannot draw facile conclusions, however, from the absence of certain poems from his translations, since Rilke abandoned various pieces because of their difficulty or obscurity (he apparently did not utilize the Guasti edition with its paraphrases in a simpler Italian).

To an extent, then, the *Geschichten* afford more direct perceptions of Rilke's interest in Michelangelo than do the *Dichtungen*. Rilke's translations from the *Rime* are so faithful ("genaue und reine," in his words) that there is no room for himself in them. (They are, incidentally, better and more literal than the English equivalents of Symonds, done two decades earlier, although both unfortunately attempted to retain rhyme.) Rilke admitted this to Ellen Delp. "Nein, natürlich spreche ich nicht Meiniges in ihnen aus, wenn ich sie meiner Sprache zu fassen gebe ... nicht von meinen Verhängnissen handeln sie."[67] But Rilke the storyteller interwove elements from the *Rime*, the *Lettere*, and the biographies reflecting not only Michelangelo's aesthetic *Anschauung*, but also those moments when the Florentine was "in tanta passione." Rilke, as he wrote more than once, was shortly thereafter to find strength and joy and purpose in Rodin, who faced his personal and professional problems with stoicism and resignation. Yet his discovery of Michelangelo, who like himself poured all his *Seelenangst* into his letters and poems and who faced as a young and dedicated artist some of the same problems which were already beginning to torment Rilke as the century closed, could not fail to afford the comfort and encouragement of *sympatheia*.

It has been supposed that Rilke's association with Rodin, who had written that the Florentine had "held out his powerful hand to me" and saved him from the academism of Ingres,[68] heightened Rilke's interest in Michelangelo. It has also been supposed that the admitted influence of Rodin in making Rilke view art as an artist rather than as a *littérateur* gave the younger man a new approach to Michelangelo. The *Geschichten vom lieben Gott* of 1899 disprove the first supposition and the *Dichtungen des Michelangelo* of 1914-23 invalidate the second.

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[67] Rilke, *Briefe* (Wiesbaden, 1950), II, 292.
[68] Judith Cladel, *Rodin* (New York, 1937), p. 46.

DRYDEN AND SAINT EVREMOND

JOHN M. ADEN

IT IS NOT surprising that students of literary criticism have frequently been tempted to link Dryden with the popular influence of the *émigré* French critic Saint Evremond.[1] Certainly the external evidence is plentiful enough to encourage such speculation: the contemporaneity of the two critics, their presence in London during the greater part of their literary careers,[2] Dryden's known fondness for French critical example, and Saint Evremond's "oracular" reputation among his contemporaries. And indeed internal evidence is not lacking in specific acknowledgment by Dryden[3] and in an at least superficial similarity in the critical thinking of the two writers. Like Dryden, Saint Evremond holds by the doctrine of pleasure as the end of poetry, the doctrine of *bon sens*, and the doctrine of the historical viewpoint.[4] He

[1] J. E. Spingarn (*Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, I, cii) links Saint Evremond directly to Dryden's interest in historical criticism. A. F. B. Clark (*Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England*, pp. 289-292) is impressed with the "family resemblance" in their critical works. A. A. Tilley (*Cambridge History of English Literature*, V, 430) describes Saint Evremond as "an oracle on both sides of the Channel," a phrase earlier used by George Saintsbury, who declared that the French critic was "an oracle of the younger men of wit and pleasure about London" (*Dryden*, p. 124). But Dryden does not acknowledge "casually casting [his] eye on" Saint Evremond until 1683 ("Life of Plutarch," *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 70).

[2] Saint Evremond resided in London from 1662 to 1665 and again from 1670 until his death in 1703.

[3] Compared with his opportunities of mentioning the French critic, and with the frequency of his mention of other critics of that nation (cf. Corneille, Boileau, Rapin), Dryden gives relatively slight recognition to Saint Evremond. Of the five times he names Saint Evremond outright, four occur in the "Character of M. St. Evremont," where mention was unavoidable. The other occurs in the "Life of Plutarch." In the Dedication of the *Aeneis* he seems to allude to Saint Evremond in the following noncommittal terms: "another whom I name not," "One of these censors," "another French critic," and, perhaps, "One of their own great authors." W. P. Ker (*Essays of John Dryden*, II, 296 and *passim*) seems to think that Dryden's refusal to name him was "out of respect," since Dryden disagreed so heartily with Saint Evremond on Virgil; but it is hard not to believe that the reason was a kind of petulance which Dryden bore to the Frenchman, generated by the latter's antagonism to almost everything that Dryden respected—ancient literature, Virgil in particular, the rules, Horace, etc.—and perhaps, as Saintsbury suggests (*Works of John Dryden*, XVIII, 17, and *History of Criticism*, II, 271) because, in his "De la Comédie Angloise," Saint Evremond mentioned Shadwell's *Epsom Wells* and did not mention Dryden or any other contemporary English dramatist.

[4] See, in order, "A Mr. Le Maréchal De Créqui," I, 96; *ibid.*, p. 95, and "Du Merveilleux Qui se trouve dans les Poëmes des Anciens," II, 506; and "Lettre à Madame La Duchesse Mazarin," III, 178-179. The edition referred to here and throughout is that of Charles Giraud, *Œuvres mêlées de Saint-Evremond* (Paris, 1865), 3 vols.

is impatient of the authority of the ancients, especially Aristotle,[5] and of the restrictions imposed by the rules.[6] Like Dryden, he is on the side of the moderns in the *Querelle*. He approves the modern superiority in enforcing poetic justice, in mitigating the effects of pity and fear by the introduction of the element of love, and in the depiction of grandeur, magnificence, and dignity.[7] And, like Dryden, he censures the affected tenderness, the softness and effeminacy, of modern drama and the modern tendency to confuse the passions.[8]

Such an array of circumstantial evidence is calculated to arouse suspicions of influence. Closer examination, however, fails to justify such suspicions. This paper will attempt to show that, contrary to general supposition, Saint Evremond exerted little if any influence on his English contemporary, John Dryden.

To begin with, one finds Saint Evremond's bias for the moderns and against the ancients too strong to link with Dryden's. Saint Evremond is almost perverse in his strictures on the ancients and their works. He is scornful of Horace,[9] of Aristotle and the Athenian stage,[10] of Aeneas and to some extent of Virgil himself,[11] and of supernatural machinery in ancient epic and drama.[12] One perceives that there is a difference in degree of "modernism" involved, a difference which, it would seem, renders any superficial similarities unimportant. Saint Evremond's literary liberalism was thoroughgoing, unqualified by any respect to convention or tradition, and at times far in advance of his age. Dryden's position was much more moderate. Though he was capable of refusing servile attachment to authority, he never ignored the *consensus gentium*. "Why should there by any *Ipse dixit* in our poetry, any more than

[5] "De la Tragédie Ancienne et Moderne," II, 321.

[6] "De la Comédie Angloise," II, 387.

[7] "De la Tragédie Ancienne et Moderne," II, 330 ff., and "Sur les Tragédies," II, 363 ff.

[8] "De la Tragédie Ancienne et Moderne," II, 331.

[9] "On me dira qu'Horace avoit très-bon goût, en toute chose; c'est ce qui me fait croire que ceux de son temps ne l'avoient pas: car son goût consistoit principalement à trouver le ridicule des autres. Sans les impertinences, les affectations, les fausses manières dont il se moquoit, la justesse de son sens ne nous paroitroit pas aujourd'hui si grande." ("A Mr. Le Maréchal De Créqui," I, 95.)

[10] The indictment of Aristotle is strong: "Il faut convenir que la *Poétique* d'Aristote est un excellent ouvrage: cependant il n'y a rien d'assez parfait pour régler toutes les nations et tous les siècles. Descartes et Gassendi ont découvert les vérités qu'Aristote ne connoissoit pas; Corneille a trouvé des beautés pour le théâtre qui ne lui étoient pas connues; nos philosophes ont remarqué des erreurs dans sa *Physique*; nos poëtes ont vu des défauts dans sa *Poétique*, pour le moins à notre égard, toutes choses étant aussi changées qu'elles le sont." ("De la Tragédie Ancienne et Moderne, II, 321.)

[11] "Réflexions sur nos Traducteurs," II, 357-358.

[12] "Du Merveilleux Qui se trouve dans les Poëmes des Anciens," II, *passim*. He is inconsistent on the point of the marvelous in the epic; cf. "Du Merveilleux..." and "Sur les Poëmes des Anciens," II, 493. The moderns, he asserts, have surpassed the ancients in eliminating supernatural machinery from the drama ("A Mr. Le Maréchal De Créqui," I, 95).

there is in our philosophy?" he could ask in the Preface to *An Evening's Love*;[13] yet he always clung to his conviction that we are "not to make new rules of the drama, as Lopez de Vega has attempted unsuccessfully to do, but to be content to follow our masters, who understood Nature better than we."[14]

Dryden is generally more catholic than Saint Evremond. Saint Evremond's enthusiasm for the present made him contemptuous of the past; but Dryden never let a spirited defense of the moderns trap him into disrespect for the ancients. We get a clue to his considered judgment of the relative claims of antiquity and modernity in his observation in the Dedication of *Examen Poeticum*: "there is a vast difference between arguing like Perrault, in behalf of the French poets, against Homer and Virgil, and betwixt giving the English poets their undoubted due, of excelling Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles."[15]

Certainly, with respect to Aristotle, Horace, and Virgil, one observes a distinct disparity in the views of the two critics. Like Saint Evremond, Dryden could feel that it was not always "enough that Aristotle had said so;"[16] but he never questioned Aristotle's common sense, as Saint Evremond did, and never exhibited the hostility to and suspicion of the *Poetics* that are so conspicuous in Saint Evremond's criticism. As for Horace, though Dryden did not relish his *sermo pedestris*, he never questioned that his "meat" was "nourishing."[17] And, with regard to Virgil, he took more than one occasion to differ directly from Saint Evremond.[18]

The same differences of degree can be found in the respective attitudes of the two critics regarding the rules. Saint Evremond was aloof from them, reduced them to the generalities of *bon sens* and *raison*, and almost ostentatiously omitted the conventional use of them in his criticism. Dryden, though also capable of "snatching a grace" beyond their reach, never neglected them. His attitude is best expressed in "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting": "some rules . . . are necessary . . . for with-

[13] Ker, I, 138. See also *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, Ker, I, 43-44.

[14] "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting," Ker, II, 139.

[15] Ker, II, 6.

[16] "Heads of An Answer to Rymer," Scott-Saintsbury, XV, 390. Dryden had, in fact, expressed this view before Saint Evremond ("To My Honoured Friend, Dr. Charleton," 1663, and *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 1668). Saint Evremond did not express the idea until 1672, in "De la Tragédie Ancienne et Moderne." Of course, challenging the authority of Aristotle had long been a commonplace phenomenon and is by no means new with the two critics under consideration. The only point to be made here is that, in relation to Saint Evremond, Dryden had the precedence.

[17] "Discourse of Satire," Ker, II, 85, 86.

[18] In the "Character of M. St. Evremont" (Scott-Saintsbury, XVIII, 14-16) and in the Dedication of the *Aeneis* (Ker, II, 166, 184, 201-202). See also "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting," Ker, II, 128.

out rules there can be no art, any more than there can be a house without a door to conduct you in it."[19]

Add to these differences in basic viewpoint the fact that Dryden enunciated his views in advance of Saint Evremond and the likelihood of Saint Evremond's influence is rendered even more remote.[20]

There is evidence of still other differences in viewpoint. Saint Evremond notoriously despised the opera: "Une sottise chargée de musique, de danses, de machines, de décorations, est une sottise magnifique, mais toujours sottise . . ."[21] One need not labor the point of difference here. Dryden both practiced and defended the genre. Saint Evremond, moreover, was led by his strong rational bias to reject altogether the ancient machinery of the supernatural in tragedy and to look askance at it in the epic. Dryden never held such a view;[22] in fact, as late as 1693 he was outlining a detailed scheme for the use of the supernatural in modern poetry.[23] Saint Evremond explicitly rejected Christian machinery;

[19] Ker, II, 138.

[20] It may be worth mentioning again that, in speaking of chronological precedence here, there is no intention of suggesting that the chronological problem begins with Dryden and Saint Evremond. Obviously, nearly all the questions dealt with by Saint Evremond and Dryden—historical criticism, anti-Aristotelianism, genius of the age, etc.—had been dealt with many times before. They were, in other words, commonplaces. The scope of this paper does not, however, permit projecting the full background of classical commonplace—here the problem must be restricted to settling the question of chronological precedence between two critics. If it can be shown that Dryden expressed a critical viewpoint before Saint Evremond, then it may be inferred that Dryden is not indebted to Saint Evremond for that viewpoint. With this in mind, the chronology may be summarized. It has already been shown that Dryden preceded Saint Evremond in questioning the authority of Aristotle (above, note 16). Dryden decided in favor of the moderns and also enunciated the principle of historical criticism in *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, four years or more prior to Saint Evremond's statement of the same principles in "De la Tragédie Ancienne et Moderne" (1672). In the same essay Neander went as far as Dryden ever cared to go in urging a reasonable freedom of the rules (see Ker, I, 75-76, 78-79), preceding by a decade or possibly more Saint Evremond's first significant utterance on the subject ("De La Comédie Angloise," 1677); and Dryden's *ipse dixit* pronouncement (1671) preceded by one year all of Saint Evremond's important critical writings. Finally in *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* Dryden expressed his sympathy with double plots nine years before Saint Evremond gave his sanction ("De La Comédie Angloise," 1677), and his predilection for love in tragedy four years before Saint Evremond endorsed it ("De la Tragédie Ancienne et Moderne," 1672). All that this signifies, of course, is that Dryden reached the fountain of commonplace before Saint Evremond. But he did reach it first, and, what is even more important, he imbibed more moderately.

[21] "Sur les Opéras," II, 391.

[22] Dryden had little to say about supernatural machinery in the drama, though we may assume that he would greatly restrict its use there. In the Dedication of the *Aeneis* he says, "As for what Horace says . . . that no machines are to be used, unless on some extraordinary occasion . . . that rule is to be applied to the theatre . . . and means no more than this, that, when the knot . . . is to be untied, and no other way is left . . . then, and not otherwise, let a God descend . . ." (Ker, II, 211). Saint Evremond would not have it at all.

[23] Ker, II, 30-37 ("Discourse of Satire"). See too Dryden's defense of "aerial

Dryden vigorously defended it.[24] Again, if one may judge by Saint Evremond's infrequent and unfavorable references t[illegible]ncient epics, and by his great attention to tragedy, which he called "la plus belle chose que nous ayons,"[25] it may be inferred that he and Dryden also differed on the question of which is the greater kind of poetry; for Dryden always spoke for the epic.[26]

Finally, there is a difference in literary temperament involved in a proper assessment of the relationship of these two critics. Saint Evremond did not possess the poetic instinct. He was skeptical of the very things which make poetry possible. Poetry "se plaît dans les fictions, dans les figures, toujours hors de la réalité des choses; et c'est cette réalité qui peut satisfaire un entendement bien sain."[27] "Le génie de notre siècle," he boasted, "est tout opposé à cet esprit de fables et de faux mystères. Nous aimons les vérités declarées; le bon sens prévaut aux illusions de la fantaisie; rien ne nous contente aujourd'hui, que la solidité et la raison."[28] This may consort with the utmost spirit of the Enlightenment, but not with Dryden. There is in it none of Dryden's large poetic faith, so pronounced in the "Essay of Heroic Plays" and "The Author's Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic License."[29] Dryden too believed that "No man should pretend to write, who cannot temper his fancy with his judgment,"[30] but he never abandoned his conviction that "fancy . . . is the principal quality required in [the poet]: for so much the word ποιητής implies . . . 'tis fancy that gives the life touches, and the secret graces . . ."[31] Dryden belonged partly to the Renaissance, Saint Evremond wholly to the Enlightenment.

Dryden's actual contacts with Saint Evremond were few, scattered, and preponderately late in his career.[32] It has been suggested that the

spirits" and with them ancient epic machinery in the Preface to *Tyrannic Love*, Scott-Saintsbury, III, 381; also *passim* in the "Essay of Heroic Plays."

[24] "Discourse of Satire," Ker, II, 37. This was in reply to Boileau's objections.

[25] "Sur les Opéras," II, 403.

[26] See Dedication of *The Conquest of Granada* (Scott-Saintsbury, IV, II), "An Essay of Heroic Plays" (Ker, I, 154), "The Author's Apology" (Ker, I, 181), "A Discourse of Satire" (Ker, II, 37-38, 43), and Dedication of the *Aeneis* (Ker, II, 154). But see also *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (Ker, I, 101), where Neander says that tragedy may be "justly preferred above the other."

[27] "A Mr. Le Maréchal De Créqui," I, 95.

[28] "Sur les Poëmes des Anciens," II, 500.

[29] Dryden's poetic faith is apparent in almost everything he wrote. It is present in all his evaluations of Shakespeare and Milton, and it is what makes him, despite his occasional cavils, continue to admire them. It explains his admiration of Ovid too. It is present in his defense of supernatural machinery, in his replies to Saint Evremond's strictures in the "Character of M. St. Evremont," in his defense of Virgil everywhere, and it is implicit throughout the Preface to the *Fables*.

[30] Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*, Ker, I, 222.

[31] Preface to *An Evening's Love*, Ker, I, 146.

[32] The first alleged contact is in "Heads of An Answer to Rymer" (1678?), shown below to be untenable. Dryden does not mention Saint Evremond before 1683, in the "Life of Plutarch," where, though acknowledging him "ingenious,"

influence of Saint Evremond's emphasis upon historical criticism is reflected in the "Heads of An Answer to Rymer."[33] Since it has been shown that Dryden anticipated Saint Evremond in the use of this method of criticism, at least two tests would be required to show that Dryden may (at least) have been "confirmed in his native tendency by Saint-Evremond's example."[34] There would have to be acknowledgment of such a contribution by Dryden, or verbal parallelism sufficient to argue such an effect would have to be discoverable. The application of such tests gives a negative result; Dryden nowhere names Saint Evremond, nor are there any verbal grounds for supposing any connection with the French critic. The "Heads of An Answer to Rymer" is a logical place to search for the influence of Saint Evremond; for, besides the historical viewpoint so conspicuous there, there is also a general tendency to dissent from Aristotle's doctrine of pity and fear, and an insistence on the excellence of love as a tragic theme. But topical similarity, especially of commonplaces, is insufficient to establish indebtedness in the face of otherwise negative evidence.

The handling of Saint Evremond in the "Life of Plutarch" is perhaps significant as much by what it implies as by what it explicitly reveals. It has already been seen that Dryden was somehow unwilling to name Saint Evremond outright when referring to his criticism. In the "Life of Plutarch" he makes two indirect references to the French critic before naming him at last in connection with Seneca's Latin style. This fact and the suggestion of irony conveyed in his remarks makes it worthwhile to quote him. The first reference is in connection with Saint Evremond's adverse appraisal of Plutarch's *Lives*:

> I thought I had answered all that could reasonably be objected against our author's judgment; but casually casting my eye on the works of a French gentleman, deservedly famous for wit and criticism, I wondered, amongst many commendations of Plutarch, to find this one reflection:—'As for his comparisons, they seem truly to me very great, but I think he might have carried them yet farther, and have penetrated more deeply into human nature. There are folds and recesses in our minds, which have escaped him; he judges man too much in the gross, and thinks him not so different as he is often from himself...'[35]

Dryden's reaction is interesting:

> This judgment could not have proceeded but from a man who has a nice taste in authors; and if it be not altogether just, it is at least delicate: but I am confi-

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he disagrees with his estimate of Plutarch (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 70-71). That there is any contact in the Preface to *Albion and Albanius* (1685) has never been suggested. (See, however, Ker, I, 323-324, and Montague Summers, ed., *The Dramatic Works of John Dryden*, V, 525.) Dryden does not name Saint Evremond again until 1692, in the "Character." There are oblique references to him in the Dedication of the *Aeneis*.

[33] Spingarn, *op. cit.*, I, cii and note 4; Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

[34] Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

[35] Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 70. Is there a hint of Dryden's estimate of Saint Evremond's criticism in his "casually casting" his eye?

dent, that if he pleases to consider this following passage, taken out of the Life of Sylla, he will moderate, if not retract, his censure: . . .

Here, methinks, our author seems to have sufficiently understood the folds and doubles of Sylla's disposition . . . But this is sufficient to vindicate our author's judgment from being superficial; and I desire not to press the argument more strongly against this gentleman, who has honored our country by his long residence amongst us.[36]

Dryden's next reference to Saint Evremond is to "An ingenious Frenchman," this time in connection with Seneca, whom the ingenious Frenchman prefers for his person rather than his works. Dryden dares not "push the commendation so far."[37]

Dryden finally names the French gentleman and borrows from him. Since they are too lengthy to include here, the passages may be compared in the originals.[38] Dryden cites Saint Evremond on the absence of purity and elegance in the Latin of Seneca, and borrows from the French critic Petronius' observations against Seneca and Lucan. The borrowing is illustrative and historical and obviously does not involve influence.

There are good indications that Dryden was not happy in the assignment of writing a "Character of M. St. Evremont." The sketch is quite brief and perfunctory, and its whole tone is restrained and suggestive of antagonism to its subject. What he has good to say of Saint Evremond is restricted to externals: "There is not only a justness in his conceptions, which is the foundation of good writing; but also, a purity of language, and a beautiful turn of words . . ."[39] "If I durst extend my judgment to particulars," he adds, "I would say, that our author has determined very nicely in his opinion of Epicurus . . ."[40] There is a definite suggestion of irony as well as an overt rebuke in his concluding remarks:

Be this said with all manner of respect and deference to the opinion [of Virgil] of Monsieur St. Evremont; amongst whose admirable talents, that of penetration is not the least. He generally dives into the very bottom of his authors; searches into the inmost rescesses of their souls, and brings up with him those hidden treasures which have escaped the diligence of others. His examination of the 'Grand Alexandre,' in my opinion is an admirable piece of criticism; and I doubt not, but that his observations on the English theatre had been as absolute in their kind, had he seen with his own eyes, and not with those of other men. But conversing in a manner wholly with the court, which is not always the truest judge,

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71. Is there irony in "nice taste," "delicate," and "honored our country by his long residence amongst us"?

[37] *Ibid.* The commendation Dryden declined is in the "Jugement sur Sénèque, Plutarque et Pétrone," and is just as Dryden puts it.

[38] See Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 75-76, and *Œuvres, ed cit.*, II, 272, 274.

[39] Scott-Saintsbury, XVIII, 13.

[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14. Is it significant that, of all the things he might have judged of among the "particulars" of Saint Evremond, he chose to speak only of his estimate of Epicurus?

he has been unavoidably led into mistakes, and given to some of our coarsest poets a reputation abroad, which they never had at home.[41]

The greater part of the sketch, itself very small, is devoted to a reply to Saint Evremond's strictures on the character of Aeneas, a matter in which Saint Evremond was so far from influencing Dryden that the latter took some four occasions, in this piece and in the Dedication of the *Aeneis*, to disapprove and refute.

Dryden alludes to Saint Evremond three, perhaps four, times in the Dedication of the *Aeneis*, and in every instance but one (a doubtful attribution anyway) it is to disagree with the Frenchman. In no instance does he name Saint Evremond and, except that they show disagreement with Saint Evremond's views, the allusions are not significant.[42]

The evidence against the supposition that Saint Evremond influenced Dryden may be summed up as follows: the fundamental differences in critical outlook, differences so pronounced as to render dubious the significance of any superficial similarities; Dryden's chronological precedence in the expression of many doctrines which, in varying degrees of emphasis, they shared; the infrequency and lateness of Dryden's reference to Saint Evremond; Dryden's open disagreement with Saint Evremond in several matters; the suggestion of personal antagonism in such references as Dryden does make to the French critic; and the absence of significant borrowings or of other satisfactory evidence of influence. If Saint Evremond were truly "an oracle on both sides of the Channel," it would seem that he never became one for Dryden.

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[41] *Ibid.*, p. 16. It is certainly difficult not to suspect irony in the description of Saint Evremond's diving. One is put in mind of Pope's *Bathos* and of the diving contests described in the *Dunciad*. Saintsbury conjectures that "some of our coarsest poets" refers to Shadwell, whose *Epsom Wells* Saint Evremond cites in "De la Comédie Angloise." See above, note 3.

[42] The allusions are as follows: (1) to "another whom I name not, ... scarce worth answering [for his censure of Virgil]" (Ker, II, 166 and note, II, 296); (2) to "One of these censors" who argues cowardice in Aeneas' tears, whom, he says, he has formerly answered (Ker, II, 184 and note, II, 299); (3) to "another French critic, whom I will not name, because I think it not much for his reputation [that this critic objected to Virgil's similitudes] (Ker, II, 201-202 and note, II, 300); (4) to "one of their [the French] own great authors" who charges his countrymen with "want of genius" (Ker, II, 219 and note, II, 302-303). G. R. Noyes (*Poetical Works of John Dryden*, 1908, p. 1007) suggests Rapin as the author alluded to in this last reference. It could be either. In any event, the allusion is not a transaction of influence.

ISLAM AND THE KORAN IN *FINNEGANS WAKE*

J. S. Atherton

REFERENCES to Islam and the Koran in *Finnegans Wake* form a mere thread in the enormous and intricate bulk of Joyce's book. It is a tangled, slender thread—so slender that its very existence does not seem to have been previously noticed—yet at the same time one worth tracing; for, although its windings do not lead us to the center of the labyrinth, they do guide us through some unsuspected corners of its dark paths.

Joyce had, as I will show, studied the Koran in some detail and was probably talking about himself when he made his Shaun say of his Shem: "I have his quoram of images all on my retinue, Mohomadhawn Mike" (443/1).[1] On one level of meaning this can be interpreted as saying that Joyce, who is jokingly calling himself a Mohammedan Irishman—and a homadhaun, which is Irish for a lout—has all the images from the Koran on his retina. This last word is also telling us that the first European translation of the Koran was a Latin version by an Englishman, Robert of Retina—a fact Joyce probably learned from Hughes's *Dictionary of Islam* where Robertus Retenensis is so named and where the Koran is always given its Arabic spelling *Qur-an*. The Koran is divided into a hundred and fourteen chapters called suras, each with its own somewhat quaintly sounding title, such as Ant, Bee, Cow, and so on, taken from some distinguishing word in one of its verses. The word sura is said to mean a row or series of similar objects, such as a row of bricks, but it is never used for anything except the chapters of the Koran. It occurs several times in *Finnegans Wake* with its usual connotation. "Surabanded" (494/28) is probably intended to draw the reader's attention to a typically Joycean device of weaving the titles of the suras into his text whenever Islam or the Koran come into his mind. The English titles seem to have been taken from a table set out in Hughes's *Dictionary of Islam*[2] and are usually quoted without any alteration in spelling. Hughes's table is reprinted at the end of this paper, with the addition of the numbers of the pages in *Finnegans Wake* on which the English or Arabic titles have been found.

The Arabic titles are rarely used. Joyce refers to a number of them mockingly at one point: "what though preferring the stranger, the coughs and the itches and the minnies and the ratties" (488/33). "The coughs" are Suras 50, 18, and 46: *Qaf*, *Kahf*, and *Ahqaf*. "The itches"

[1] Figures in parentheses give the page and line in *Finnegans Wake* (London, 1939) on which a quotation commences.

[2] Second ed. (London, 1896), pp. 490-492.

are 15 and 70: *Hijr* and *Ma'arij* (the letter *J* in Arabic has a sound like our *tch*). "The minnies" are 40 and 23: *Mu'min* and *Mu'minun*. "The ratties" are 13 and 49: *Ra'd* and *Hujurat*. The basic meaning of the whole passage is that a man is foolish to leave his own home and own country to go seeking after strange gods amongst alien people speaking a foreign tongue. ("The stranger" is still current usage for a man who is not Irish.)

Usually the titles are given in English, although two or three are in Latin, and a few others may owe their somewhat unfamiliar English form to the fact that Joyce owned,[3] and presumably used, a French translation of the Koran by J. C. Mardrus. Mardrus's name is mentioned twice in *Finnegans Wake*, "the Murdrus dueluct" (374/12) and "The author, in fact, was mardred" (517/11). On both occasions there is a strong suggestion that Joyce disapproved of Mardrus's translation. But it seems to have been Joyce's rule in *Finnegans Wake* that, whenever he quoted from a book, he mentioned the author's name, his only exception being the authors or compilers of dictionaries—presumably because their work is intended to be used by other writers. So Robert of Retina, from whose work Joyce took two or three Latin titles, is named in *Finnegans Wake*, while I can find no mention of T. P. Hughes, whose *Dictionary* Joyce seems to have used extensively.

But Joyce had certainly read the Koran, and some knowledge of the contents of the sura of which the title is being quoted is often necessary to understand his text. "The grand ohold spider" (352/23) is a reference to Sura 29: Spider. This title is taken from the words of verse 41: "The parable of those who take guardians beside Allah is as the parable of the spider that makes for itself a house . . ." Verse 43 of the same sura reads: "And as for these parables We set them forth for men, and none understand them but the learned." At about an equal distance down his own page Joyce sticks out his tongue to retort: "Dom Allaf O'Khorwan, connundurumchuff."

Lokman (367/1) is the Muslim prophet whose name is used as the title of Sura 31. He is best known in Islam for the admonition he gave to his son on the respect due to parents, in the course of which he told his son that Allah knew all his acts, even to the weight of a grain of mustard seed sunk deep into the earth. Joyce had little sympathy with such paternal homilies and comments: "And he grew back into his grossery baseness: and for all his grand remonstrance," which seems to say that Lokman's hortation was fruitless.

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[3] The Joyce Exhibition, Paris, 1949, included Joyce's *Bibliothèque de travail à Paris* as items 348 to 453. No. 409 was "*Traduction . . . du Koran*, Paris, 1926, Dr. J. C. Mardrus." I am indebted to Mr. M. J. C. Hodgart for a copy of the catalogue of books in this exhibition and for some valuable advice on this paper, and I wish to thank Mrs. A. Glasheen and Mr. A. Davenport for many helpful suggestions and criticisms.

The first sura of the Koran, *Fatihah*, has to be recited every time a Muslim says his prayers. There is a description of this being done at the point where this sura is named in *Finnegans Wake*. "They say their salat [*salat* is Arabic for prayer], the madiens' prayer to the messiager of His Nabis [*Nabi* is Arabic—and Hebrew—for prophet] prostitating their selfs . . . Fateha, fold the hands. Be it honoured, bow the head" (235/1). Folding the hands, bowing the head, and prostrating oneself are well-known attitudes of Mohammedan prayer. "Ablution," which must precede such prayer, is mentioned next. Then the prayer begins and we are told: "Their orison arises misquewhite as Osman glory, ebbing wasteward, leaves to the soul of light its fading silence (alla-lah lahlah lah!), a turquewashed sky." The phrase in parentheses is an echo of the final words of the Muslim call to prayer: *La ilaha ill-Allah*, "There is no God but God." The titles of several other suras are woven into the same passage. "The Messenger" is Sura 77, and *Naba* is the Arabic title of Sura 78. "Light" is Sura 24; its Arabic title *Nur* is used by Joyce elsewhere (310/24), together with an allusion to the contents of the chapter. It is written in Sura 24 that God's light is like a lamp encased in glass; no doubt this was a rich and shining image to the Arabs of the seventh century, but it reminds Joyce of an electric bulb: "a mirage in a merror . . . muzzinmessed for one watthour . . . bottlefilled." It will be noticed that there is an error in the mirror; the Koran is quoted only to be confuted, for Joyce remains—as the authors of *The Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* have pointed out—"a good son of mother Church," in some ways, even though he had left his Church.

Joyce's hostility to the Koran is shown in his reference to Sura 111, *Abu Lahab*, or "Flame." This sura, one of the shortest, consists entirely of a declaration that Abu Lahab shall be burned and his wife laden with the wood for his pyre. Joyce gives both the name and number of the sura in his reply: "and a hundred and eleven other things . . . I will commission to the flames" (425/31). This statement is hidden in a diatribe by Shaun against Shem; a reference to Zoroastrianism and the Zend Avesta I must ignore. According to one interpretation Shem and Shaun are two aspects of the character of James Joyce—Shem is the banned and exiled author that Joyce was, Shaun is the popular accepted writer that he might have been. Mohammed is here considered as one symbol for Shem; and the reasons for this will be considered later.

The titles of the suras are spread fairly evenly through *Finnegans Wake*, but come in thicker clusters at certain passages. These same passages usually contain several Turkish and Arabic words—more often Turkish than Arabic, perhaps because there is no dictionary of the Arabic language in our alphabet and Joyce was restricted to the words

he could find transliterated in his books of reference. A small group of Turkish words comes at the end of the first chapter: *shebi*, likeness; *adi*, ordinary; *batin*, belly; and "hamissim" (29/33), which includes *hamisen*, fifthly. Several more occur in the pages preceding the sudden appearance and abrupt subsidence of Lokman. "Villayets" (365/16) is *vilayet*, a province. *Taraf* means ends or limits. "A bad of wind and a barran of rain" includes *bad*, wind, and *baran*, rain. *Sippah* is an obsolete Turkish word for soldier, from which comes the English word "sepoy." "Upkurts" includes *kurt*, Turkish for wolf. Frequently the foreign word is followed by its English equivalent, as happens with the phrase "Para's pence" (98/14), where *para* is Turkish for money. In "ansars helpers" (5/25) the first word is the Arabic for the second. As Hughes explains, the reference of the word is usually to Mohammed's amanuenses, the Ansars, who wrote down the words of the Koran from its illiterate author's dictation. Joyce's Shaun approved of this method of composition and planned to use it: "I'd pinsel it with immenuensoes as easy as I'd perorate a chickerow of beans . . . the authordux Book of Lief . . . " (425/18). When Joyce's sight failed he used the method himself.

Often the Turkish and Arabic words masquerade in English dress, conveying the normal meaning of their disguise upon the surface of the narrative at the literal level. When their disguise is penetrated they add a fresh quantum of significance to a deeper level. To take another example from the Lokman passage there is a sentence: "Brow, tell nun; eye, feign sad; mouth, sing mim" (366/36). On the literal level this is an injunction to a young lady to behave modestly. Another meaning appears when the words *nun*, *sad*, and *mim* are recognized as the names of three Arabic letters corresponding to our *N*, *S*, and *M*. These are three of the mysterious letters which introduce certain suras. Hughes's *Dictionary of Islam* has under "Nun": "The letter N which occurs at the commencement of the LXVIIIth Surah of the Qur'an. The meaning of which is acknowledged by all commentators to be a mystery." *Sad* is the title of Sura 38. The whole passage is an example of the Gnostic sense "which none understand but the learned." The unlearned are apparently expected to amuse themselves with the pun on the words nun and none, for flippancy—like everything else—comes into *Finnegans Wake*. A flippant treatment of another Arabic letter appears in the words "jims in the jam, sahib" (121/18), where *jim* is not only the name by which Joyce was known to his friends but also the Arabic name for the letter *J*—which according to the childish joke is always in jam.

All the suras except the ninth begin with the formula known as the *Bismillah*: "In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate." Joyce parodies this twice. Once he turns it into "In the name of Annah

the Allmaziful, the Everliving . . . " (104/1). *Ana* is Turkish for mother, *mazi* Turkish for olden times and the past tense. On the next page is a reference to "the stream of Zemzem." Zemzem, usually rendered Zamzam, is the sacred well within the precincts of the mosque at Mecca. Joyce may have taken it from Hughes, but the spelling suggests that he had consulted the earliest accurate account of it in English in the "Introductory Discourse" to George Sale's translation of the Koran,[4] where we are told that "The Mohammedans are persuaded that it is the very spring which gushed out for the relief of Ishmael when Hagar his mother wandered with him in the desert . . . The water of this well is reckoned holy and is highly reverenced being not only drank with particular devotion by the pilgrims but also sent in bottles, as a great rarity, to most parts of the Mohammedan dominions."

The same passage in *Finnegans Wake* contains the polysemantic phrase "his Dual of Ayessha" (105/19), which certainly includes in its implications that Ayesha who was the best-loved wife of the Prophet. They were married when she was nine and he was over fifty—a disparity in ages which gives one reason for the inclusion of Mohammed in *Finnegans Wake*, where the love of an old man for a young girl is a major theme. The rest of Mohammed's family are also mentioned by name. "Abdullah" (34/2) was the prophet's father, and the question "Ibdullin what of Himana" (309/13) contains a variant spelling of Abdullah and an anagram of Aminah, the name of the Prophet's mother. Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, is mentioned twice by name—once as a type of Eve (205/31), perhaps because all the "Posterity of the Prophet" are descended from her; once as an example of the transmitter of a tradition (389/15), for many of the "Sayings of the Prophet" are said to owe their preservation to her remarkable memory.

Mohammed is mentioned by name many times. It is significant of the part he plays in *Finnegans Wake* that Joyce's spelling never allows him the exclusive use of his own name. One example is *"So saida to Moyhammlet and marhaba to your Mount!"* (418/17), where the Prince of Denmark seems to be contesting the Prophet's right to his own name. *Saida* means not only "said I" but also Zaid, the Prophet's adopted son who divorced his wife so that Mohammed could marry her. *Marhaba* is Arabic for "Good morning." The *Mount* must be Mount Hira where Mohammed claimed to have received his first revelations. These came to him, so he said, through the agency of an angel; but for *Finnegans Wake* it is more important that the angel appeared to him in a dream. Mohammed is thus one facet of the figure of the dreamer who is dreaming *Finnegans Wake*. In many of the multitudinous but faulted laminations that constitute the mountain which is Joyce's final

[4] *The Koran . . . to which is prefixed a preliminary discourse*, by George Sale, new edition (London, 1825), I, 162.

work, this dreamer is also the father-figure H. C. E., and to him too the figure of the Prophet adds extra breadth and depth. The father is also the adversary of the son. This is seen in the word "Mahamoth" (244/36), where he stands for the Old Enemy, Mahmoud, the ancient figure of evil, against whom the Crusaders fought, combined with the mammoth the Stone Age men feared. In one place he undergoes a surprising change of sex: "... his Cape of Good Howthe and his trippertrice loretta lady, a maomette to his monetone" (312/19). The same thing happens in another part of the book to Napoleon and his two wives, who find that "la pau' Leonie has the choice of her lives between Josephinus and Mario-Louis..." (246/16). Why this should happen I cannot explain, unless it is a further working out of the Freudian theory that in dreams either/or equals and, or as Joyce puts it (281/27):

> either or.
> And.
> Nay, rather.

But the change of sex only touches Mohammed in the one sentence. In the rest of the book he represents the father-figure or the writer. It is worth mentioning at this point that H. C. E. is said to be humpbacked and that Mohammed had some kind of lump on his shoulder which is variously described as a wart, a slight deformity, or an organ of prophecy. Behind the figure of H. C. E. in *Finnegans Wake* looms the figure of Finn McCool, the sleeping giant. In a section describing Finn we are told that "the false hood of a spindler web chokes the cavemouth of his unsightliness but the nestlings that liven his leafscreen sing him a lover of arbuties" (131/18). This is an allusion to the legend that Mohammed hid from his enemies in a cave, where he slept while a spider built its web across the entrance and a bird laid its eggs upon the ground before it, so that the Prophet's enemies were certain that no one had approached the cave for days and did not look inside. When Shaun considers exile he mentions Mohammed's night journey on a winged horse to Jerusalem. "I'll borrow a path to lend me wings, quickquack, and from Jehusalem's wall, clickclack, me courser's clear... I'll travel the void world over" (469/8). The "clickclack" is the hoofbeats of the winged courser.

Many other aspects of Mohammed's life and character may have caused Joyce to include him in his book as a type of the writer or the poet. He was an exile forced to leave home in order to continue his mission and compose his book. He was a son who found, to his sorrow, like Joyce's Stephen, that his religious convictions forbade him to pray for his dead mother. Yet it seems certain that it was the Koran with its suras, "the sure ads of all quorum" (312/34), which was Joyce's main interest, and that Mohammed comes in as the writer of that book which

is for so many millions of people what Joyce wished his own book to be in another sense: The Book. At the same time Joyce's dream technique "touring the no placelike no timelike absolent" in his "sinegar clutchless" (609/1) has to include also all Mohammed's background, even introducing Ad, the legendary founder of one of the Arab tribes, who is mentioned in the Koran. So the "sure ads" are not only the suras, and a good advertisement for the Koran, and a sure sign for Joyce's readers that the Koran is being mentioned, but also the twelve tribes of Arabs confident in their faith.

Joyce intended *Finnegans Wake* to subsume all the world's sacred books and brought into it every book he knew that had ever been considered sacred, even down to such rare oddities as Ludovick Muggleton's *Looking Glass For The Quakers* (312/26, 123/21). But the Koran interested him for an additional, purely technical reason; it is not only sacred but also extremely difficult to interpret. Perhaps it has been the necessity of making a reputedly infallible book conform with all the changing needs of Islamic civilization in successive centuries that has led to the growth of the intricate science of Koranic exegesis, perhaps it is the intricacy of the Koran itself; but no book—not even the Bible—has been studied with such devoted subtlety.

Hughes's *Dictionary of Islam* contains, under the article "Qur-an," a subsection purporting to give a brief outline of the ways in which the Koran has been explained. This summary, which Hughes declares to be exiguous and inadequate, contains well over a thousand words; but, since there is a possibility that Joyce not only read it but used it, I will give here an even more exiguous outline of Hughes's outline, aiming at exemplifying the intricacy of the system rather than explaining its intricacies:

(1) The words are of four classes: special, hidden, ambiguous, complex. (2) Sentences are of two kinds: obvious and hidden. (3) Obvious sentences may be clear, explained, technical, or incontrovertible. (4) Hidden sentences may conceal a second meaning, may have two obvious but incompatible meanings, may display a whole variety of meanings, may have no meaning that human intelligence can grasp. (5) Finally, Hughes says, there are four levels of meaning for the Koran as a whole, and he gives these levels as: literal, figurative, palpable, and metaphorical.

But this last point is subject to debate, for some Islamic scholars maintain that there are more than four levels of meaning. The alternative usually put forward is seven, but other and larger numbers have been suggested.

Such a finding of multiple meanings in a sacred book is an ancient and reputable occupation for scholars, which was certainly known to Joyce. Several years have gone by since Professor Levin first sug-

gested in his pioneer book, *James Joyce, A Critical Introduction*, that the four levels of meaning which Dante declared to be present in the *Divine Comedy* were present also in *Finnegans Wake*. It now seems certain that this is true; but with Joyce's customary "toomuchness, ... fartoomanyness" (122/36), it also seems certain that there are more than four levels, and that one of the purposes, and the results, of the slow process of accretion that produced Joyce's book was the addition of more and more levels to the literal foundation.

I hope to deal with this aspect of *Finnegans Wake* at full length elsewhere, but one example that may be given here is the pair of levels taken from the traditional journalistic coupling of "sporting and dramatic." The "sporting" level, parodying and paralleling the formal scholastic levels of literal, allegorical, anagogical, and moral meanings, declares that life and literature is a game, and may be intended to proclaim Joyce's acceptance of the Freudian doctrine that art and sport are mere surrogates for sexual activity. If so, this would explain the use Joyce makes of the highly respectable English game of cricket in the passage on pp. 583-584, where the names of dozens of cricketers are woven into an account of an act of copulation. But images and terms from every other kind of sport Joyce knew are also brought into his text at various points and players of every kind of game make momentary appearances.

The "dramatic" level ranges from Shakespeare to modern musical comedy and makes much use of Victorian melodrama by Boucicault and such plays as the frequently mentioned *A Royal Divorce*, by W. G. Wills, which was presented by W. W. Kelly's "Evergreen Touring Company" in all the important towns of the British Isles during the two decades before 1914. At its most minute, *Finnegans Wake* tells how an earwig suffers from a tropic compulsion to insert its body into narrow dark holes and thus causes itself to be burned on a bonfire. At its vastest it is something vague and majestic happening in the starry depths of space. It tells the story of creation and the history of Dublin. It even contains a level haunted by characters such as G. V. Brooke and F. Le P. Power, who were either drowned or given water burial, and constitutes what I can only describe as "the water level." In a letter to Harriet Weaver, Joyce declared that all the events of Book III are "only a barrel rolling down the Liffey,"[5] and I think that all the other books have a similar basis.

It may be objected that these "levels" have nothing to do with the Koran. On the other hand, it is certain that, if Joyce heard of anything which had been done or could be done with words, he had to do it himself; and, whether by accident or design, examples of all kinds of words and sentences listed by Hughes as appearing in the Koran occur in

[5] Unpublished. British Museum, Add. MS. 47489. Letter dated 24.V.'24.

Finnegans Wake. So it is possible that the Koran and its exegesis was one of the models Joyce used for the making of the many levels in his own book.

In other, minor ways Joyce certainly used the Koran a good deal. The titles of the suras seem to have amused him most; and it may be that the titles he gave to the chapters of the first part of *Finnegans Wake* are intentional imitations of the Koranic titles. Two of them, "Lion" and "Hen," sound very similar to the Koranic titles, and "Lion" is taken, like many of the Koran titles, from the first significant word in the chapter—"As the lion in our teargarten . . . " (75/1).

It may well be that the Koran (and perhaps also the *Book of Mormon*) is being discussed when Joyce's washerwomen are "dodwell disgustered but chickled with chuckles at the tittles is drawn on the tattlepage" (212/33); "dodwell," in this case would be J. M. Rodwell, a translator of the Koran. E. H. Palmer, another translator, is named in the sentence "Like as my palmer's past policy I have had my best master's lessons" (539/8). Sale may also be mentioned, but his name is a common word in more than one language.

The Koran appears in several unexpected ways. It is even referred to occasionally as if it were a telephone directory: "that royal pair in their palace of quicken boughs hight The Goat and Compasses ('phone number 17:69, if you want to know) his seearm strongsround her, her velivole eyne ashipwracked . . . " (275/14). Here the " 'phone number," if taken as a reference to a chapter and verse of the Koran—and it is written in the usual modern form for such a reference—gives us: "And when a mishap befalleth you at sea, they whom you invoke beside God are not to be found." The Goat and Compasses is a name sometimes found on the sign board of an English inn and is often said to be a folk corruption of the motto "God encompasseth us." The mention in Joyce's text at this point of sea, shipwreck, and the all-encompassing presence of God make it certain that Joyce's phone number really does refer to the Koran. Another example of this usage appears when someone wonders why "the passive resistant in the booth" did not "reach for the hello gripes and ring up Kimmage Outer 17.67" (72/19)—this is a rather labored allusion which would take too long to explain. But scattered about the pages preceding the reference to the Goat and Compasses are several more suratic titles. "Allies" (272/10) and "Chamber" (272/20) are the titles of Suras 33 and 49. "Livepower elbow him" (274/10) contains the word "Power," which is the title of Sura 97. "Starryk" (274/24) combines *Tariq*, the Arabic title of Sura 86, with "Stars," the English title of Sura 85, while the doubling of the letter *r* brings in Tarr, a novel by Wyndham Lewis, whom Joyce was busily attacking. It is also near-Russian for "an old man." These four words could be taken as examples of the four types of words listed

by Hughes as special, hidden, ambiguous, and complex, and it may not be an accident that they appear in the order in which Hughes lists them.

I suspect that there is a third, even more carefully hidden reference of the same kind earlier in the book in the passage "Earwicker . . . realising . . . the supreme importance of physical life (the nearest help relay being pingping K. O. Sempatrick's Day . . ." (35/21). The word "relay" suggests some electrical device. "Pingping" sounds like a bell and could be interpreted "ring." If this is so, then the passage means that Earwicker realized that his life was in danger and should have looked up the verse of the Koran corresponding to St. Patrick's Day. As a number St. Patrick's Day, March 17, can be said to equal 3:17. The seventeenth verse of Sura 3 reads: "Allah bears witness that there is no God but He; and the angels and those possessed of knowledge, being maintained by justice; there is no god but He; the Mighty, the Wise." This verse is suggested at a point when Earwicker's life is being threatened by the cad in the park. It could mean that his only possible source of help was God. There is another possible application to Earwicker's plight in that this verse, if it were said by a Christian, would be accepted by a hostile Muslim as the necessary profession of faith which would force him to spare the Christian's life. In fact the reference gives an example of Joyce's view of God as friend and enemy of mankind—the eternally beneficent Father against Whom His sons eternally make war.

That Islam is, although a minor theme, a theme of some importance may be seen from the position which the first mention of it occupies in *Finnegans Wake*. This first mention comes at the very beginning of the book, almost immediately after the *ricorso* that connects the last word to the first, and the commencing paragraphs into which are woven the titles of books of the Old Testament. "Our cubehouse still rocks as earwitness to the thunder of his arafatas but we hear also through successive ages that shebby choruysh of unkalified muzzlenimi-issilehims that would blackguardise the whitestone ever hurtleturtled out of heaven. Stay us wherefore in our search for tighteousness, O Sustainer, what time we rise and when we take up to toothmick and before we lump down upown our leatherbed and in the night and at the fading of the stars!" (5/14).

"The cubehouse" is a literal translation of the Ka'aba, centre of the Mohammedan world. "Arafata" is the plain and the hill near Mecca where all pilgrims spend the hours from noon till sunset on the ninth day of their pilgrimage. "The whitestone" is the famous Black Stone of the Ka'aba; for, to quote Hughes again, "the Prophet said that the black stone when it came down from Paradise was whiter than milk, but that it has become black from the sins of those who have touched it." Several somewhat labored allusions to the Koran follow, and then

Joyce goes on to list the set times of the five obligatory prayers of Islam. These start officially just after noon and Joyce's version will fit correctly if we assume that his readers stay in bed till then. "What time we rise" should be the noon prayer. "When we take up to toothmick" is when the sun is half way towards its setting. Mohammed is known to have been very fond of using a slender twig as a toothpick; Ayesha handed him one as he lay dying. "Before we lump down upown our leatherbed" is the sunset prayer. In the division of spoils after the Battle of Badr it was recorded that a leather bed counted as the equivalent of "one camel with its gear or two camels unaccoutred."[6] "In the night" is the prayer when night has closed in, and the last one "at the fading of the stars" is the prayer just before dawn. Even without the evidence of the interspersed allusions to things Islamic, there can be no doubt, from the almost exact correspondence of the times, that this is intended to be an account of the Islamic prayers, and it is significant that Joyce chose just this routine order to open *Finnegans Wake* with prayer.

Joyce, like Carlyle, probably admired Mohammed for the statement he is said to have made that the Koran was his miracle and that no other was required to prove his divine mission. The Koran refers to the accusation that Mohammed had forged the book. "Or do they say he has forged it? Then bring a chapter like this and ask who you can to write it besides Allah!" (Koran, 10:38). And Mohammed repeatedly challenged his detractors to compose even one chapter like those of the Koran. Much is made in *Finnegans Wake* of Shem's "epical forged cheque" (181/16), and there seem to be many other allusions to forgeries with the underlying suggestion that Joyce's own writings are forgeries. But the important point is here that Joyce, who devoted an entire chapter of *Ulysses* to proving that he could write like anybody he wished to imitate, was not the man to let a challenge like Mohammed's go unanswered; and in one place in *Finnegans Wake* he seems to be claiming that he has accepted the challenge and met it.

The action at that point is both a Victorian Music Hall act in a public house with the landlord as chairman and a televised scene showing two cross-talk comedians, Butt and Taff (their names may be taken from President Taft and his A.D.C. Butt, who was drowned in the *Titanic* disaster). They are discussing the shooting of a Russian general and their patter is full of allusions to Mohammed and the Koran. Following the reference to the spider and "Dom Allaf O'Korwhan" which has already been pointed out, Taff parodies the *Bismillah*: "And the name of the Most Marsiful, the Aweghost, the Gragious One!" (353/2). Butt's reply is prefaced by the words "maomant scoffin," which suggests that he is at that moment scoffing at Mohammed; and we are told that he is "deturbaned" which seems to imply that he is determined

[6] Hughes, *op. cit.*, art. "Muhammud."

and has removed his turban—the Mohammedan headdress. "Die and be diademmed" following this is obviously a summary of the Muslim doctrine that those who die in the fight for the advance of Islam, "ottomanic faith converters" (263/10), as Joyce calls them, will go at once to Paradise. The Italian expression "Senonnevero" does not seem to fit, but may be an allusion to Hughes's surprisingly callous use of the phrase in reference to the grim fate that befell all the male Jews and Christians of a certain province as the result of a diacritical mark being left off the word for "count" in an official letter.[7] The passage "then hemale man . . . now shedropping his hitches" (581/18) and "*Se non é vero son trovatore*" (301/16) may have been suggested by the same source, for both seem to mention castration.

After all this Islamic "business" in the act Butt says "That he leaves nyet is my grafe. He deared me to it and he dared me do it, and bedattle I didaredonit." This may mean that Butt, who on one level stands for Joyce, is sorry that Mohammed is dead, that he endeared himself to Joyce by his works, that he issued a challenge, and that Joyce has dared to accept the challenge and has succeeded in carrying it out. In short that Joyce has written a chapter like the Koran, and if anyone should ask which chapter the answer is any or all the chapters, but especially the Anna Livia chapter, for Joyce wrote: "you could wright anny pippap passage . . . as foine yerself . . . Christ's Church varses Bellial!" (301/6). The word "anny" is naming the chapter and Joyce is setting himself up as the Christian champion. The titles of four suras are woven into the surrounding sentences to tell us that Mohammed is one of Joyce's opponents.

But in an article such as this there is always a danger of making what is essentially a minor theme seem highly important; and it should be remembered that, although the references to Islam and the Koran may appear, from the selections assembled here, to be abundant, they form a very small part of Joyce's book. Nor does the theme exist as a separate entity clearly marked off from the rest of the book. There are few dividing lines in *Finnegans Wake*, and it is difficult to distinguish references to the Koran from vague generalizations about the sensual pleasures of the Mohammedan Paradise such as "boundlessly blissfilled in an allallahbath of houris" (417/27). The theme branches off and merges and blends with all kinds of others: with the other sacred books, with Oriental works such as *The Thousand and One Nights* (in Burton's version, not Mardrus's) and the *Rubaiyat*, with the Crimean War and with allusions to modern Turkey such as "yldist kiosk" (135/18), which must be Abdul Hamid's palace on the Bosphorus, but which for some reason is preceded in *Finnegans Wake* by a mention of Charles

[7] Hughes, *op. cit.* art. "Writing."

Collette's incredibly named opera bouffe, *Cryptoconchoidsiphonostomata.*

As has often been said, Joyce tried to put everything into *Finnegans Wake.* He saw himself, from his earliest boyhood, as one set apart to create for his own race, a race which he considered to be without a literature of its own, a national literature which would transcend or subsume all the literature of the world and all the writings of history. And he assumed that his work would be given that devoted and patient exegesis which has been given to the sacred books of the past. Whether it is worth this attention or not is a point which is still unsettled; but human nature being what it is, it is probable that the task of unlocking the multitudinous boxes that contain and conceal Joyce's message will be continued for many years. Should the final box prove, as it well may, to be empty, the present writer will be satisfied to have played a small part in unwrapping the richly varied foliations in which it is ensheathed.

Wigan, England

THE SURAS OF THE KORAN IN *FINNEGANS WAKE*

The titles of the suras are taken from Hughes's *Dictionary of Islam,* 2nd edition, 1896, pp. 490-492. Variant renderings from other sources have been added in parentheses beneath a few titles. The list of references to *Finnegans Wake* is admittedly incomplete. No attempt has been made to list all the occurrences of such common words as "night." But the compiler would be glad to hear of any additional references to the less usual words and particularly grateful for any help in filling up the gaps. Page numbers in ordinary figures refer to the English title; italic numbers refer to the Arabic title.

Arabic	*English*	*Mentioned in F. W.*
1. Fatihah	Preface	*235*, 347
2. Baqaeah	Cow	63, 83, 90, 105, 243, 427, 444, 455, etc.
3. Alu' Imran	Family of Imran	316 (him ... Ran), 228? (Sems of Aram), 444 (family of Imean)
4. Nisa	Women	173, 548, 581, etc.
5. Maidah	Table	26, 94, 127, 456, 462
6. Anram	Cattle	63, 316, 548
7. A'raf	Araf [Eminences]*	5 (arafata) 494 (emanence ... his seventh)
8. Anfal	Spoils	124
9. Taubah	Repentance	231? (contrite attrition)
10. Yunus	Jonah	245, 323, 358, 455
11. Hud	Hud [Hood]	*186*, *285* *235* (nebohood=the Prophet Hood)
12. Yusuf	Joseph	125, 213, *262*, 366, *512*, 607 ("fourth of the twelfth" indicates verse 4 of Sura 12, Joseph's dream)
13. Ra'd	Thunder	5, 52, 314, 488, 491, etc.
14. Ibrahim	Abraham	78, 104, 106, 307, *346*, 570
15. Hijr	Rock	5, 64, 170, 254, *488*

16. Nahl	Bee	238, 242, 387, 461 [The gaelic *beac*, bee, 590, commemorates Joyce's day as sub-editor of *The Irish Beekeeper*]
17. Banu Israel	Children of Israel	27?
18. Kahf	Cave	16, 131, 365, *488*, 586
19. Maryam	Mary	27, 239, *265*, *293*, 309, 366, 440, 492
20. Ta Ha	Ta Ha [T. H.]	443 (Toc H.=T.H.)
21. Ambiya	Prophets	29, 33, 50, 68, 240, 305 ("He prophets most who bilks the best." Verse 5 of this sura reads: "They say it is a medley of dreams; nay he has forged it"—Rodwell), 307, etc.
22. Haji	Pilgrimage	51, 62, 312, *347*, 472, 483, *533*, *571*
23. Mu'minin	Believers	*488*, 491
24. Nur	Light	214, *310*
25. Furqan	Koran	20, 40, 242, 297, 312, 366, 368?, 443, 597
26. Shu'ara	Poets	482
27. Naml	Ants	18, 197, 516, 579, etc.
28. Qasas	Story	12, 28, 35, 63, etc.
29. 'Ankabut	Spider	108, 131, 244, 352
30. Rum	Greeks	6, 11, *17*, *243*, *281*, 620 (Gricks)
31. Luqman	Lokman	367
32. Sajdah	Prostration	235, 365 (should a dare)
33. Ahzab	Confederates	84, 349 (comfoderacies)
34. Saba	Saba [Sheba]	68, 198
35. Mala'ikah	Angels	90, 238, 482, 605
36. Ya Sin	Ya Sin [Y.S.]	605?
37. Saffat	Ranks	469
38. Sad	Sad [S.]	*281*, *366*
39. Zumar	Troops	273?, 510?
40. Mu'min	Believer	301, *488*, 491
41. Fussilat	Explanation	63, 524
42. Shura	Council	
43. Zukhruf	Ornaments	183
44. Dukhan	Smoke	64, 337, 362, 469, 577, 578
45. Jasiyah	Kneeling	394, 612?
46. Ahqaf	Ahqaf	*488*
47. Muhammad	Muhammad	20, 54 (mamooth), 82, 244 (mahamoth), 297, 312 (maomette), 491 (Maomi), 499 (Mahmato), 597 (mahamaya), 623 (me hamage), 418 (Moyhammlet)
48. Fath	Victory	472, 500
49. Hujurat	Chambers	45, 94, 105, 272, 455, 456, *488*, 548, 585
50. Qaf	Qaf [Q.]	*488*
51. Zariyat	Scattering Winds	589? (gales to smithereens)
52. Tur	Mountain	19, 21, 32, 90, *90*, 241, 309, 455, etc.
53. Najm	Star	23, *29*, 59, 341, etc.
54. Qamar	Moon	54, 59, 138, 244, 341, etc.
55. Rahman	Merciful	104, 353
56. Waqihah	Inevitable	110, 441, 599
57. Hadid	Iron	27, 138, 207, 242, 245, 310, 351, 392, 456
58. Mujadilah	Disputer	
59. Hashr	Assembly	97
60. Mumtahinah	Proved	161
61. Jumuah	Assembly	97
62. Saff	Array	593
63. Munafiqun	Hypocrites	489? (My shemblable! My freer!—Baudelaire)

64. Taghabun	Mutual Deceit [Manifestion of Defects]	589? (counterbezzled) 589 (exposition of failures)*
65. Talaq	Divorce	441, 586 [A common word, which usually refers to the play, *A Royal Divorce*]
66. Tahrim	Prohibition	453
67. Mulk	Kingdom	18, 213
68. Qalam	Pen	19, 301, 303, 483
69. Haqqah	Inevitable Day	461? (last day)
70. Ma'arij	Steps	68, *488*
71. Nuh	Noah	47, 64, 125, 178, 244, 463, 513, 611
72. Jinn	Genii	*23, 262, 597*
73. Muzzamml	Wrapped Up	20 (the rapt one—the same sound as the English title and the same meaning as the Arabic original)
74. Muzzamml	Enfolded	244 (folded), 444? (swaddled), 604? (swathed)
75. Qiyamah	Resurrection	62, 138, 499, 593
76. Dahr	Time	173, 206, 236, 350, 356, 453, 546, etc.
77. Mursalat	Messengers	235 (messiager . . . salat), 609 (messangers)
78. Naba	News	*235*
79. Nazi'at	Those who Drag	546 (dragged asunder—with Sura 82)
80. 'Abasa	He Frowned	301 (frowner)
81. Takwir	Folding Up	213? (folded), 576? (folding)
82. Infitar	Cleaving Asunder	546
83. Tatfif	Short Measure	336? (Measure)
84. Inshiqaq	Rending in Sunder	170 (rending of the rocks—with Sura 15), 546 (with Suras 79, 82—these three seem to form a sort of "word ladder")
85. Buruj	Celestial Signs [of the Zodiac]	56
86. Tariq	Night Star	*34, 239, 274, 356* [Tariq is also the name of the Arab conqueror of Gibraltar. *Tarr* is a novel by Wyndham Lewis]
87. A'la	Most High	*213*, 309, *311, 355*, 609? (high host)
88. Ghashiyah	Overwhelming	381?
89. Fajr	Daybreak	138, 222, 293, 534, etc. (all preceding "dawn"?), 353? (Dawnybreak)
90. Balad	City	127, 205, 364, 481, etc.; *42*, etc. (ballad?)
91. Shams	Sun	90, 473, 494, 481, etc.; *170*, etc. (Sham?)
92. Lail	Night	40, 49, 138, etc.
93. Zuha	Sun in his Meridian	612? (sun in his halo), 494 (sun in his emanence)
94. Inshirah	Expanding	410, 440, 488? (expancian)*
95. Tin	Fig	*12*, 42, 322, *350*, 583
96. 'Alaq	Congealed Blood [Clots]	453? (congealed) 186, 498
97. Qadr	[Night of] Power	56, 346, 347, 521, etc.
98. Baiyanah	Evidence	86, 314, 534
99. Zalzalah	Earthquake	18 (quaky . . . earth)
100. 'Adiyat	Swift Horses	15, 490 (both "houhnhyms"?)
101. Qari'ah	Striking	314, 501 (unhindered and odd times=101)
102. Takasun	Afternoon	460
103. Asr	Slanderer	34 (slander), 199? (calumnia)

104. Humazah	Multiplying	119, 281?, 405?
105. Fil	Elephant	244, 300, 427, 461, 513, 564
106. Qaraish	Whale	197, 241, 245, 311
107. Ma'un	Necessaries	*201*, *254* (mahun)
108. Kausar	Kausar	61? (Keysars)
109. Kafirun	Infidels	589, *614*
110. Nasr	Assistance	393?
111. Abu Lahab	Abu Lahab [Flame]	153 (the one one oneth of the propecies) 27, 425-426, 621
112. Ikhlas	Unity	101, 176, 585?
113. Falaq	Daybreak	[See 89 above]
114. Nas	Men	62, 461, 472, *516*, *522*, *524*, etc. [But Naas is an Irish race course and Maas was a famous singer; Nas is the last word in the Koran]

* May be a literal translation from the French version.

YEATS AND POUND: THE ILLUSION OF INFLUENCE

THOMAS PARKINSON

"HOW THE hell many points of agreement," Ezra Pound asks a correspondent, "do you suppose there were between Joyce, W. Lewis, Eliot and yrs. truly in 1917; or between Gaudier and Lewis in 1913; or between me and Yeats, etc.?"[1] The question was rhetorical and it is perhaps impolite to answer it; but it has been answered with apparent conviction by several critics recently, and answered too simply, especially with respect to Pound and Yeats. Thus John Berryman says of the change in Yeats' style that he has "... always supposed Pound the motor";[2] and, though Hugh Kenner and F. R. Leavis are more restrained in their conclusions, Leavis finds that Pound "... influenced ...Yeats beneficently at a crucial moment..."[3] and Kenner that Pound "... effected some transfusion of ironic discipline into Yeats..."[4] A. N. Jeffares and Vivienne Koch also argue that Pound's influence on Yeats was profound, and it is fast becoming a platitude that Pound was one major—if not *the* major—force in creating Yeats' later style. Like all such platitudes it will not bear close inspection, but on critical examination alters to an hypothesis that bears little resemblance to the original flat statement. There is little evidence pointing to Pound's influence on Yeats; there is not much more indicating that Yeats was very important to Pound; and there is a great deal to support the view that the two men present the unusual instance of master and disciple outgrowing one another in areas eccentric to the original points of agreement. Yet they remained bound to one another by affection and the tension of fruitful disagreement.

The tension is exhibited in a letter from Pound to Sarah Perkins Cope (1934) in which he betrays his uneasiness in dealing with Yeats' later poetry: "Are you still young enough to read Ole Uncl. William Yeats? Or at least to tell me how it strikes the young and tender of your generation?"[5] Pound, with his admirable and almost compulsive desire to keep up with and remain capable of instructing "les jeunes," is here

[1] *The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (New York, 1950), p. xxii.

[2] John Berryman, "The Poetry of Ezra Pound," *Partisan Review* (April 1949), p. 379.

[3] F. R. Leavis, "Ezra Pound: The Promise and the Disaster," *Partisan Review* (Nov.-Dec. 1951), p. 730.

[4] Hugh Kenner, "Remember That I Have Remembered," *Hudson Review*, III (1951), 603.

[5] *Letters*, p. 257.

betraying a certain uneasiness before a poetry that, while not to his taste, had an apparent and puzzling vital attainment to recommend it. Nor is it any mere habit of thinking antithetically that compelled Yeats to write, in *A Packet for Ezra Pound*, that Pound was a man "... whose art is the opposite of mine, whose criticism commends what I most condemn, a man with whom I should quarrel more than with anyone else if we were not united by affection ..."[6] When Pound was at work on the *Cantos* and Yeats at work on *A Vision* and his later poems, the two men regarded one another with respect tinged by suspicion.

This ultimate disagreement indicates that perhaps the relations between the pair in the period 1908-17 were not so simple and unilateral as Kenner and others now assume. For if Pound taught Yeats how to write major poetry there is something a little unsettling in his judgment of Yeats—after the publication of *The Wild Swans at Coole*. With this first of Yeats' later books available to him, Pound wrote to William Carlos Williams that Yeats had "faded." Apparently he was a little annoyed with his pupil, as he was in the 1930s when he returned to Yeats the lyrics from *The King of the Great Clock Tower* with the single comment "putrid." His lack of sympathy for Yeats' later poems and Yeats' dubious appreciation of the *Cantos* tend to undermine the view that Pound could radically alter the poetry of a man some twenty years older than himself, a man distinguished, Irish, and stubborn.

Yeats and Pound first met in 1909, but until 1911 the two men were not close friends, perhaps because, as Pound said, "Only after five years of acquaintance does he [Yeats] learn to distinguish one member of the race from another member."[7] The period of their intimate relation began in May of 1911 when they met in Paris while Yeats was free of the pressures that beset him in the British Isles:

> Yeats I like very much. I've seen him a good deal, about daily, and he has just gone back to London. As he was here for quiet, one got a good deal more from him than when, as before, he has been occupied with other affairs. He is as I have said once before, a very great man, and he improves on acquaintance.[8]

Before this chance meeting their relations had been distant and formal. Arriving in London at the age of twenty-three, Pound was awed by Yeats' achievement and reputation; to him Yeats was the greatest living poet, and in his letters he mentions him with a curious mixture of reverence and pride. When Pound gave his series of courses at the Polytechnic in 1909, Yeats was the only contemporary that he found sig-

[6] W. B. Yeats, *A Vision* (New York, 1938), p. 3.

[7] *Letters*, p. 96.

[8] Unpublished letter in the American Literature Collection of the Yale University Library. The present article is based largely on materials in this collection, to which I have had access through the courtesy of the Yale University Library. The letter is dated May 1911 and addressed to Pound's father, Homer L. Pound.

nificant enough for inclusion. When rumor had it that Yeats intended to say something "nice" about Pound in a public lecture, Pound was elated.[9] With some possible exceptions on the continent, Pound then thought, Yeats was "the only living man whose work has more than a most temporary interest."[10]

This judgment was based on *The Wind Among the Reeds* and a few short lyrics in some of the other collections.[11] These poems proved to him that Yeats was one of the few nineteenth-century English poets who could teach him anything about the technique of verse. He learned from Yeats, taking up similar subjects, even his metrical tricks. Yet he used archaic diction and inverted syntax almost at will in his early poems, devices that Yeats had scrupulously shunned after 1890. Thus Pound:

> **Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood**
> **And many a new thing understood...**

The inversion in the second line exists purely in order to purchase a rhyme for *wood*, and the archaic *nathless* and *amid* show that the early Pound was farther from modernity than was his master. Moreover, the dominant milieu of Yeats' verse—the Irish and the cabalistic—differs markedly from that of Pound's—Provence and the Middles Ages generally. What they share is the very special attitude of weariness and distrust of experience, of nostalgia for a happier and more interesting time, of isolation in the service of art, that distinguished English poetry of the 1890s. Since Pound neither imitated Yeats' diction or syntax nor followed him into the *anima mundi* with its Symbolist implications, it seems likely that he admired Yeats' poetry because it combined craftsmanlike excellence with a congenial tone.

By 1911, when the two men became intimate friends, both had outgrown Yeats' early style. If we are to understand properly the relation between the two in the years 1911-17, we must realize first that Yeats had become, by 1899, a master of the poetic mode of the 1890s; second that, between 1899 and 1910, he had served an apprenticeship in the theater, attaining dramatic mastery in the process; and, third, that a complex of factors—his personal life, his theater experience, his constitutional will toward self-regeneration—all had conspired to direct a concerted criticism of himself, his thought, and the methods of his early verse. Pound did in time outgrow the early Yeats; but it is also true that Yeats himself—before meeting Pound—had outgrown the early Yeats.

In 1911, when Pound first came to be on intimate terms with Yeats, he had become, under the stimulus of T. E. Hulme and Ford Madox

[9] Yale Collection, Mar. 2, 1910, to Pound's mother, Isabel W. Pound.
[10] *Ibid.*, Jan. 1, 1910, to Isabel W. Pound.
[11] *Ibid.*, around Sept. 1909, to Homer L. Pound.

Hueffer (Ford), interested in the type of poetry that we know under the label "Imagism." Yeats' refusal to have any truck with Imagism grew from his preoccupation with the symbolic, and in Pound's mind he became the prototype of the Symbolist; as he wrote in 1937 to William Carlos Williams: "Yeats for symbolism Hueffer for clarity."[12] But Hueffer stood for more than clarity; as he wrote in 1911, his ideal poet would "... voice the life of dust, toil, discouragement, excitement, and enervation that I and many millions lead today";[13] he would "reflect his own day."[14] Hueffer did not apply this criterion foolishly; he stipulated the legitimacy of Hardy and of the early Yeats. But Yeats' indifference to Hueffer and his *English Review* was, to Pound's mind, one of his blind spots.[15] For Yeats was interested in his own day. He did write occasional satirical poems on Abbey Theatre controversies or on the Hugh Lane fight; but Ireland was his chief social reality and the occult, spiritualism, and alchemy the chief spiritual reality. Moreover, Imagism, with its stress on the intellectual-emotional complex caught in a moment of time, was at odds with his stress on the enriching conflict between temporal and eternal reality. Yeats wrote that he wished "... to live a passionate life, and to express the emotions that find one thus in simple rhythmical language,"[16] and he said also that "The words should be the swift natural words that suggest the circumstances out of which they rose."[17] This is not Imagism, but an expression of Yeats' interest in the dramatic nature of lyric poetry, an interest that had become an increasingly major motivation in his verse from 1899 onward. His verse from 1912 to 1917 develops, refines, elaborates the techniques of the dramatic lyric that he had already firmly established in main outline with the publication of the *Green Helmet* in 1911 and carried further in *Responsibilities* (1914).

One basis for the belief that Pound had a profound influence on Yeats rises from the fact that for three winters—1913-14, 1914-15, 1915-16—Pound acted as Yeats' secretary at Stone Cottage in Sussex. That Yeats thought Pound was helping him is suggested by his statement to Lady Gregory that working on a poem with Pound was like working on a sentence in Irish dialect with her; and, despite the lack of any real evidence, it is probably true that their intimate association had impact on Yeats' poetics. But when Pound offered to read contemporary literature to Yeats, he preferred to hear Browning and Morris. And though Pound, at Yeats' suggestion, did go through the early poems and point

[12] *Ibid.*, some time in 1937, to William Carlos Williams.
[13] Ford Madox Hueffer, *Collected Poems* (London, 1913), p. 342.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 340.
[15] Yale Collection, Oct. 18, 1936, to H. Swabey.
[16] Richard Ellman, *W. B. Yeats, The Man and the Masks* (New York, 1948), p. 210.
[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

out the "abstractions" (unneeded epithets), Yeats did not revise those poems until about 1923. When he did revise them, the resultant poetry was very similar in texture and design to the poetry of his 1911 and 1914 volumes, poetry for the most part written before the winters in Sussex. The lyrics written by Yeats from 1913 to 1916 are mainly occult or Irish in subject, in techniques similar to those of his lyrics written between 1903 and 1912. If Pound had any effect on Yeats' lyrics during the Sussex winters, it is not visible.

Pound did not find Yeats an eager disciple. Reviewing *Responsibilities* for *Poetry*,[18] Pound shows a certain reluctance to praise, growing out of his rapidly developing sense that Yeats (being a Symbolist) was, for all his personal friendship, in the other camp. He points out that there is no reason to expect a man to be a leader in two distinct literary movements. His main point, however, is dual: Yeats made important contributions to English poetry in his early work; he may not be in the "movement" at present, but his recent poetry has a new hardness. After praising Yeats for having " . . . driven out the inversion," he describes a "new note" and "change of manner," a certain freedom from neo-Celtic "glamour" and a new "quality of hard light," all of which he approves. He stresses the fact that Yeats is a Symbolist, *not* an Imagist, though he points out that he has written "*des Images* as have many good poets before him." Pound seems, for him, very tentative in his judgment, certainly reluctant to blame but at the same time hesitant to praise. He is sympathetic, he is even hopeful, he is certainly respectful, but he is not—as he clearly was in an article on Hueffer written at the same time—celebrative and warm.

As becomes plain from Pound's published and unpublished correspondence, his early awed reverence for Yeats was gradually changing, under the pressure of intimacy, to admiration tempered by impatience. To Pound's mind, Yeats was more than a great and useful friend—though he was that, he was also a source of encouragement and support—he encouraged Pound's intransigence and supported his impulse to tell people to go to Hell.[19] At the same time Pound found Yeats something of a bore with his incessant talk about spiritualism and his refusal to look with much interest on poetry after Morris. He could not stomach Yeats' occult experiments or accept his interest in the rhetorical and abstractly didactic modes of poetic discourse, his need for stanzaic formality, his use of the widely suggestive symbol, the cogent general statement.

From 1913 through 1915, while Yeats doggedly continued working on Irish and occult material in the manner of the dramatic lyric, Pound was busy on a series of works that typically sprawl over six or seven

[18] *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* (May 1914), pp. 64-69.
[19] *Letters*, p. 178.

literary modes: continuation of the Provence poems, some new yawps and blasts in the Whitman manner, experiments in the Imagist mode, imitations of the classic Latin epigram, the *Cathay* translations from the Fenollosa manuscripts, and, from the same source, the translations of the Japanese Noh drama. Of these various works Pound was least satisfied with the Noh translations ("... it's all too damn soft")[20] but Yeats was, perversely, most smitten by them. They answered his constitutional need for a theater but did not require that he stand for the insults and injuries attendant on a popular stage. Of his adaptations of the Noh form Yeats could say with characteristic aloofness, "... I have invented a form of drama, distinguished, indirect, and symbolic, and having no need of mob or press to pay its way—an aristocratic form..."[21] Pound deals with the matter more practically:

> He [Yeats] has done a play of his own on the Noh model, and is preparing a new dramatic movement, plays which won't need a stage, and which won't need a thousand people for 150 nights to pay the expenses of production. Yeats seems to expect the new drama to do something, at least there will be no compromise, actors will wear masks, scenery will be mostly imagined, at most a cloth or a screen...[22]

Yeats had already been using minimal scenery—the 1911 version of *The Countess Cathleen* used a painted cloth as background—and he had long been meditating on the occult significance of the mask and considering also the stage possibilities of masks. The Noh drama made extensive use of supernatural figures, gods and spirits; and to Yeats, with his abiding preoccupation with the relation between the temporal and the eternal, it was very exciting to hear that the crises in the plays often came with the revelation that one of the characters was in fact a god or spirit. The translations from the Noh drama fell into ready hands.

Yet it was not mere arrogance that prompted Yeats to assert that "*I* have invented a form of drama..." The basic structure of the Noh drama had already been present in his *Plays for an Irish Theatre* (1911), though not so formally, so ritualistically, fixed. In *Deirdre* (1907), for instance, the scene opens with songs by two musicians; a subsidiary character then enters and talks, chiefly to himself with occasional asides to and from the musicians. He then meets the two main characters, who engage in a dialogue; the supernatural then intervenes, the play reaches its climax, the singers conclude with a choral comment. The general pattern of the action is similar to that of many Noh plays, and it was a pattern toward which Yeats was by temperament inclined,

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

[21] *Certain Noble Plays of Japan*, translated by Ezra Pound and with an introduction by W. B. Yeats (Dundrum, 1916), p. ii.

[22] Yale Collection, Feb. 1916, to Homer L. Pound.

allowing for a brief intense action dramatized mainly in dialogue, accompanied by song. *At the Hawk's Well* and *The Dreaming of the Bones*, both written after Pound's translation of the Noh drama, merely carry this pattern to a more rarefied level of abstraction while retaining the basic verse textures of Yeats' Abbey plays. The Noh drama provided a form allowing for the natural development of certain tendencies in Yeats' early plays; it encouraged and strengthened, it did not shape and change.

After 1917 and Yeats' marriage—at which Ezra Pound served as best man—the literary winters in Sussex came to a halt, and the poets drifted apart. Pound had already started the *Cantos* and Yeats with the aid of his wife began the series of psychical experiments and historical and philosophical studies that would culminate in *A Vision*. Both men were committed to differing modes of writing, and what strength they had gained from intimate association was to result in major but basically differing poetries. Yeats would seek a symbolic system that would let him dramatize both the circularity of history and the occasional intrusion of immortal upon mortal. Pound would create ideograms that would let him criticize by juxtaposed images the straight line of decay of usury-ridden monotheistic civilizations. Yeats would cultivate the inner vision of the magician, attempting by incantation to evoke heroic images from the *anima mundi* as models of emulation for the Irish. Pound would, by compelling his readers to *see* economic fact, purify the language and intellect of Western Europe. Perhaps the difference between the two poets is best evinced by their interest in Oriental thought, Pound praising the political perspicacity of Confucius and the clear sense of fact underlying it, Yeats praising the logical and boundless forms of Hindu thought and the symbolic sense of eternal reality that it vindicates.

Between Yeats the advocate of the symbol and Pound the champion of the ideogram lies an unbridgeable gap. Once Pound found what he wanted to become, and that it was *not* a Symbolist, that it was something new and other, something clear, definite, hard, limited, he could not accept the bias of a Yeats. For Yeats fundamentally disliked certainty and definiteness, liked the suggestive force of the unconsciously directed symbol. Pound thought metaphysics and theology were bosh, and yielded to no Marxist in his persuasion that reality was essentially political and economic. Yeats, on the other hand, could—as Rilke urged —"assume the metaphysical," though he was careful not to confine himself to one or two metaphysics, fluctuating between vitalism, pure idealism, and dualism with a splendid disregard for system.

The two men grew apart, their basic differences in temperament and poetic intention gradually forcing a basic divergence of judgment. From this initial awed reverence, through respect tinged by impatience,

Pound came eventually to the conclusion that Yeats was, aesthetically though not personally, an enemy. In 1946 he wrote to E. E. Cummings that he remembered very little that Yeats said in print after 1908; from 1920 on his estimate of Yeats' later poetry sank lower and lower, though he never denied the importance of his early poetry. In 1935 he referred to Yeats as a "historic munnymint,"[23] and in 1936 wrote to Basil Bunting that Yeats is "dead," that his "stuff [is] slop," and that he is merely "clinging to [the] habit of being a writer."[24] His chief complaint was against Yeats' "fade out and increasing difficulty of reading the buzzard."[25]

Yeats during this same period remained interested in, and puzzled by, Pound's poetry. He liked *Mauberley*,[26] and once told Pound that he could have outdone Eliot in writing an introduction to Pound's *Selected Poems*.[27] But Yeats' two major public statements on the *Cantos* were not favorable. His celebrated paragraph on the *Cantos* in *A Packet for Ezra Pound* elicited some Poundean invective: "... Yeats' bloody paragraph. Done more to prevent people reading Cantos for what is *on the page* than any other one smoke screen."[28] His reaction to Yeats' introduction to the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* is not recorded, but it was probably vigorous, for in that essay Yeats comes to certain unflattering conclusions about Pound's verse. Pound's work as a whole suffers because it has "... more style than form; at moments more style, more deliberate nobility and the means to convey it than in any contemporary poet known to me, but it is constantly interrupted, broken, twisted into nothing by its direct opposite, nervous obsession, nightmare, stammering confusion."[29] Considering the *Cantos*, Yeats confesses: "Like other readers I discover at present merely exquisite or grotesque fragments."[30] And he asks the basic aesthetic question that must give pause to any reader of the poem: "Can impressions that are in part visual, in part metrical, be related like the notes of a symphony: has the author been carried beyond reason by a theoretical conception?"[31] Though he suspends judgment for the moment, it is clear that Yeats distrusts the *Cantos*, distrusts indeed the whole body of Pound's poetry. He finds in Pound the chief source of "... that lack of form and consequent obscurity which is the main defect of Auden, Day Lewis, and their school ..."[32]

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[23] *Ibid.*, Mar. 1935, to M. D. Zabel.
[24] *Ibid.*, Mar. 1936, to Basil Bunting.
[25] *Ibid.*, May 1936, to Basil Bunting.
[26] *Ibid.*, Sept. 1, 1920, to Homer L. Pound.
[27] *Ibid.*, Nov. 27, 1928, to Olga Rudge.
[28] *Letters*, p. 321.
[29] *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, ed. W. B. Yeats (Oxford, 1936), p. xxv.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

This final disagreement was unavoidable. With it and the other evidence presented in this paper in mind, it should be plain that, if Pound exerted an "influence" on Yeats, it was minor and adventitious. A summary of their relation would read as follows: For a period the two men were capable—in a very limited sense—of learning from one another; and, though a sharp, fundamental opposition of temperament and interests doomed them to ultimate disagreement, they did strengthen one another. Yeats strengthened Pound by his technical accomplishments, by his selfless dedication to the life of poetry, and by his personal affection. Pound encouraged in Yeats certain tendencies that were already strong in Yeats' poetry and gave him his generous loyalty and admiration as well as his criticism and disagreement. The relation is complicated by the fact that Pound took the early Yeats for his master at a time when Yeats, tired of his own early accomplishments, wished to grow into a fresh set of possibilities. Both poets from 1908 to 1917 were starting from Yeats' early poetry, but they moved from this starting point to ends that were in fact mutually incompatible. They met, profited, grew apart aesthetically, but remained tenuously joined by personal affection. It is a literary relation that is, so far as I know, unique. But Yeats—*not* Pound—made Yeats a major poet.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE KENYON CRITICS, STUDIES IN MODERN LITERATURE FROM THE "KENYON REVIEW." Edited, with an Introduction, by John Crowe Ransom. Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1951. vii, 342 p.

Here is a sufficiently formidable volume. The eighteen essays and fifteen reviews, drawn more or less representatively I should say from the first twelve years of the *Kenyon Review*, beginning in 1939, touch on many of the deeper literary preoccupations of the period. A substantive review of the volume would have to say something about works by six big novelists, Joyce, Mann, Wolfe, Ford, James, and Faulkner, as well as such disparately slighter ones as Kafka, Bernanos, Waugh, and Huxley; it would deal with the poets Wordsworth, Yeats, Housman, Tate, Dylan Thomas, Marianne Moore, and W. C. Williams; with essays and criticism by John Peale Bishop, Oscar Wilde, Van Wyck Brooks, Kenneth Burke, and T. S. Eliot; with Charlie Chaplin's *Monsieur Verdoux*, the movie version of R. P. Warren's *All the King's Men*, and Robinson Jeffers' modernization of the *Medea* of Euripides. It would touch several miscellaneous and synthetic topics, some of which will be mentioned in the summary comment I am about to attempt.

To size up the fairness or accuracy of the several pronouncements by the several experts—Austin Warren on James, for instance, Bishop on Wolfe, Macauley on Ford, Auden and Ellman on Yeats, Trilling on Wordsworth—is not what I will try to do. The essay by Bishop on Wolfe, we are warned by another contributor to the volume (Howe on Bishop), is "probably unsurpassed," for he knew Wolfe "as well as he knew himself." I beg to be excused from competition. The thirty-three pieces which compose the volume, and especially in my opinion the essays, maintain a very fast pace of wit, insight, and expression. If any one of these essayists is not an expert on his topic, he yet sounds as if he were; and in general perspective and penetrative ingenuity he certainly is. There is not a dud, pedant, or dull talker in the lot, though there may be four or five, as I shall hint at more length before I am done, who are overingenious, entangled, and somewhat mightily striving. I confess to a great admiration on principle for the internal qualities of brilliance and cogency in critical writing—in response to which we are likely to say to ourselves: If this should happen not to be the precise fact, yet it is a very interesting fiction (or symbolic revelation about things in general) and one which future philologists may be taking into account. "Many of the critics here," boasts Mr. Ransom, "judge well because they are professionally sensitive to what is latent in the work, therefore likely to be difficult, and will not content themselves with what is manifest and for everybody to see." The comments which I wish to make about the *Kenyon* volume will fall under very general heads—first that of certain recurrent ideas or a basic philosophic bias of the *Kenyon* writers.

More philosophy and religion lie in the purview of the *Kenyon* writers than might be guessed by a person coming, for instance, from the direction of the Saintsburyan "criticism and literary taste" or from that of scientific philology. The aim at least is always to cut deep; the religio-philosophic orientation is not only felt in most of the essays on the individual authors, but is more deliberately developed in such speculations as that of Philip Rahv on the long battle running through American letters between "Paleface" ethical scruples and "Redskin" joyful experience and that of Philip Blair Rice on the French existentialists. The big, urgent question with which I believe almost every *Kenyon* critic is more or less

consciously preoccupied is whether the human dignity which he conceives to be the object of literature and criticism should be pushed up a little from its present mean level toward something more venerable or down a little toward something even more manageable—whether the great task of the modern athlete of the spirit is to theologize or to naturalize. These writers dwell in a vastly interesting middle or purgatorial region of spirit, dusky but illuminated by frequent brilliant meteors of natural revelation. William Barrett raises his voice with some indignation to notify T. S. Eliot that "there are people who have examined religion carefully, who know that their life would be much easier for them if they could adopt a belief, like Catholic Christianity, but whose moral conscience forbids them to do so." Up or down? Means easy or hard? Here and there the index points momentarily up—a hopeful flicker—as in R. P. Blackmur's notation on the limits of Mann's parodistic access to God through the Devil, or in Eliseo Vivas's struggle with Kafka:

"It is of the utmost importance... to note that Kafka's 'empiricism' differs radically from that which is fashionable today—that which constitutes the foundations of scientific naturalism—since the latter has been devised in order to deny the evidence which experience presents of its lack of self-sufficiency, while Kafka through an empirical examination of human existence is led to assert its dependence on transcending factors."

But Kafka never achieves security in this assertion. He never succeeds in "surpassing human anguish." His "conception of existence" remains "inherently unstable." And more often than not the message of the *Kenyon* critic is that this instability ought to be reduced by the establishment of firmer relations between the feet and the ground. Thus the upshot of Lionel Trilling's recommendation of Wordsworth to the modern mind is that Wordsworth, unlike T. S. Eliot in *The Cocktail Party*, sets great store "by the life of the common routine," the "elemental *given* of biology," and that hence, despite his well-known incapacity for tragedy, "we can say that he sought to nourish its very germ." The modern mind is far too "feral and fierce," far too "consciously heroic and charismatic," to take easily to Wordsworth. Still:

"There never was... a secular literature which so massively and so explicitly as ours directed itself to the spiritual life, for good or bad carrying the problem of life and death into the market place... In this movement of secular exploration of the spirit Wordsworth was a founding father."

The "secular exploration of the spirit" means of course nothing like a "lay apostolate." It means the secularization of the spirit. The end of Mr. Rice's essay on the existentialists gives us explicity subject and predicate here. Here is a program for which American thinking has all the needed equipment.

"Though anguish has not been lacking in American fiction and poetry, our major philosophers have been too well-organized to be deeply tinged with it... We have... the task of assimilating the insights of religious Existentialists from Kierkegaard to Tillich, who have... a subtle if dislocated eye for the drama of moral struggle and of the religious yearning. What American philosophy can well do, by its own native genius, is to translate these concerns into operable and humanistic terms."

Mr. Rice is an editor of the *Kenyon Review* and is, I take it, something like the official *Kenyon* philosopher. The philosophy, if I may offer some kind of brief metaphor, may be called Lowering Yourself by Your Bootstraps. It would be too much to say that the literary criticism of the *Kenyon* critics derives most of its kick and wit from a general spirit of irreligion. But it makes sense and is quite relevant to the appraisal of their literary insights to say that by and large the *Kenyon* writers operate in a spirit of alertness toward, and even suspicion of,

religious, especially Christian, claims. This shows itself not only in the large themes I have noted but in numerous little ways. The *Kenyon* mind is the kind of mind that is likely to assume, or feel itself forced to conclude, things like the following: that, if a poet writes in troubled terms about Christ, then theological issues are not a "live option" in his poetry (Koch on Tate); that Willie Stark is a politico-religious Messiah who "engages the imagination of the people on the same basis that even Jesus engaged it" (Tyler on *All the King's Men*); that a clergyman is a man afflicted in some special way with a "stoop," and that this is similar to a prose style which we don't like (Barrett on Eliot); that, if a novelist writes about sanctity in a convincing way which seems dependent upon the fact that he is a Roman Catholic, this fact is a "commentary on the criminal shallowness of this time" (Clark on Bernanos); that Eliot and Gide are "far from first-rate minds," even "a little stupid," and they know it (Goodman on Wilde); that a "secularist" is a good instance of, or indeed nearly the same things as, a "relatively dispassionate person" (Lebowitz on Huxley). The shrewdest hits at the contemporary religious consciousness are probably the essay by an Irishman named O'Donnell on the Gothic snobbery which gets a workout in the novels of Waugh and the review by Barrett imputing a more theoretical and thoughtful snobbery to T. S. Eliot's ideas about Christian culture. The equation "aristocracy=exploitation" is implied I think too smugly by Barrett, but he does raise some respectable questions about the Nietzschean antithesis between Christianity and aristocracy.

The *Kenyon* volume includes good statements at each end of the spectral range of modern ideas concerning the relation between literary message and literary technique, doctrine and form. "A poem is an accretion of knowledge, of which only the flimsiest portion can be translated into bromide. A poem that works well demonstrates an insight, and the insight may consist, not in the theme, but in the image-relations or the structure-relations" (Berryman on Dylan Thomas). "The moral intelligence gets into poetry ... not as moral abstractions, but as form, coherence of image, and metaphor, control of tone and rhythm" (Koch quoting Tate). "The loss of vigor in the prose reflects the loss of vigor in the mind" (Barrett on Eliot). But on the other hand: "The dialectical diabolism inherent in writing is to forget the thought in developing the image or trope in which it must be expressed, to lose sight of what is signified and see only the symbol which one is using ... In relation to the moral life, the excellence of art is secondary and symbolic rather than essential" (Wallis on Rougemont). What relations *are* possible between the ideas philosophico-religious or philosophico-irreligious which may motivate poet or critic and the imaginative power, the literary luster, of his utterance? Mr. Ransom in his Introduction calls literature the "completest" among the "public registers of the infinite human spirit," and literary criticism the "most explicit" of those registers. This notion of literature as the register of the human spirit is good nineteenth-century historism and positivism—what one finds, for instance, in Taine's Introduction to his *History of English Literature*. And as literary criticism is itself a form of philosophy and doctrine, we may say that Mr. Ransom's dictum indicates a *Kenyon* notion of the relation between philosophic statement and literary technique—statement more explicit, technique more complete. This may be all right, though how far it is all right may again depend on how much sociological relevance and determinism a given *Kenyon* critic will want to bring in.

It happens that only two of the essays in this volume come clearly under the head of general literary theory—William Empson's essay on "Emotion in Poetry" and R. P. Warren's on "Pure and Impure Poetry." But both of these are theoretical essays of the first rank. Empson's is probably the most sinuously inside job

yet done on the doctrine of his old mentor Richards that words in poetry operate by exciting emotions about nothing and hence by creating valuable illusions of values that are not there. The piece is now part of Empson's *Structure of Complex Words*. It appeared in the *Kenyon Review* at about the same time (Winter 1948) that Richards was reiterating in a Yale lecture (later published in the *Yale Review*) the early psychologism which, in view of his middle-period writings, one might have entertained a hope he had left behind. Some years before, Mr. Ransom in his *New Criticism* had likened Richards' touchy little neurological entities (appetencies and aversions) to Daisy Miller's mother's liver and the poet to her American doctor who knew so well what to do for that organ.

The *Kenyon philosophes* on the whole (though there was a notable Freudian lapse by Mr. Ransom himself during 1947) have kept their eye pretty well on the ontological objects. For this I congratulate them and Empson especially for his essay. R. P. Warren's essay, "Pure and Impure Poetry," is one of the most persuasive modern American enunciations of the principle of ironic and dramatic inclusiveness in poetry; it as a masterpiece and has been anthologized at least three other times. I feel no invitation here, any more than with Empson on emotion, to pursue the theme very far. But the concluding emphasis of Warren's essay, on the feebleness of "hand-me-down" faiths and "unearned" values, the virtue of the double vision and the reluctant affirmation, brings the essay much closer than most literary essays of the ironic school to the regions of moral and metaphysical anguish where we have seen the *Kenyon* writers characteristically dwelling. But here a tough problem is encountered—unless we are to conclude that the very anguish of the *Kenyon* writers is their goal. To recognize the ironic inclusiveness itself as a goal does not go easily with the resolves of secular common sense, and least of all when these are related to motives of social conscience. This much must be clear, whether or not we follow Yvor Winters in connecting the new irony with romantic forms of irresponsibility.

Can the ironic norm be any more comfortably connected with a theological commitment? Warren's colleague Cleanth Brooks, in an essay entitled "The Language of Paradox" (one of several by him which ought to be read as a complement to Warren's), has noted that paradox is the language not only of poetry but of theology and revelation. But whether in the same way or in what related ways (or whether paradox quite equals irony) may still require some elucidation. To take a third course, to say that the ironic noncommittal is not the mode of any theoretical discourse—whether looking up or looking down—but precisely the mode of poetical discourse (as some of the romantic Germans used to say)—this may run some danger of stopping the vital pulse of poetry. Yet there are greater dangers in the ironic norm than the danger to poetry or to poetic theory. Theorists in the mood of Warren so often seem to be saying: We like our poetry this ambivalent full way because we like our minds this way or at least because we are forced to have them this way—and that would go for religion and philosophy too if we were asked to discuss these things. Any clean statement about the universe, as Vivas says apropos of Kafka, is transparently ridiculous. "We are all caught now at this late date," says Ransom, "in the sense of our human uncertainties." "Yeats," says Richard Ellman, "makes a cult of frustration, and courts defeat like a lover." "His flaming desires are mixed with asbestos." So, for some other minds, the appropriation of irony in some special way to poetry may be strongly invited and may well be one of the most plausible conclusions that can be drawn from the *Kenyon* volume. Irony is the completeness of the register, the anguish in act; anguish formulated, or anguish resolved, is the explication and the goal. "It is the critic who must teach us to find the thing truly authoritative but hidden" (Ransom in the Introduction).

A number of the *Kenyon* essays seem to me to exhibit a quite subtle management of the relation between literature and the doctrinal dispositions which are both its life and its limit. I am thinking especially of Auden on Yeats ("in poetry all dogmas are myths"), Austin Warren on the "myth" and "dialectic" of James, John Berryman on Dylan Thomas and the "dramatic truth of metaphor," Cleanth Brooks on Housman as the wit in spite of himself. Austin Warren is perhaps the only one of the *Kenyon* writers to express any very serious misgiving about the prestige which irony nowadays enjoys. "The danger of such a philosophy is that, in its awareness, its inclusiveness, it shall turn finally sceptical, or regard ambiguity and complexity as final virtues." Many of the *Kenyon* writers, I daresay, would think of themselves as so clearly free of the ironist heresy that no such disavowal from them is needed. Yet, as I have perhaps already suggested, many of them may be more habitually loyal to the norm of irony than they are aware.

Let me say something now in conclusion about the technique, or prose style, of the *Kenyon* writers so far as that may be thought of separately from their messages—and something especially about the style of Mr. Ransom, which appears in the Introduction to the present collection and which has filled a good many pages of the *Kenyon's* first twelve volumes. The prose style of Mr. Ransom stands to my mind in a special way for the norms of urbanity and acuteness which, as editor of the *Kenyon* and arbiter of what he calls "one little corner of the American scene," he must have done a great deal to recommend to American writers of our time. I do not know whether this style has yet been the subject of a formal encomium, and I hardly aspire to that feat here. But in brief Mr. Ransom's style has always seemed to me good; and, if I tried to analyze the reason why, this style seemed to be a kind of dramatics, and at times, especially in his pre-*Kenyon* essays, a form of initiated naïveté aimed at bringing out the lost meanings of big words and of ordinary situations as the latter are sometimes covered by words.

In Mr. Ransom's style I always feel the speaker insinuating his way through some situation or turning some object in his hand and looking at it quizzically. The object or situation is the speculative problem as it has been left by other thinkers in words. But the new speaker sees and feels it as something actual which he is going to test and somewhat reshape. This speaker I venture is clearly an American and from somewhere in the middle parts of the United States, and (I hope there is not a chance that this may be offensive) he is sitting on a cracker barrel undertaking to discourse to some fellows on what Plato meant and how his meaning stacks up today or what Professor Santayana is saying these days. And he succeeds in talking both freshly like a philosopher in a young country and cagily and toughly like a man surrounded by a late bad time. (There are some moderate opportunities for the editor as stylistic strategist in the Introduction to the present volume, but for the style at its most peculiar best I believe I look back to certain earlier essays, and notably to the two in *The World's Body* on Aristotelian *mimesis* and *catharsis*.) This style is the obviously fitting literary counterpart of that American kind of philosophy described by Mr. Rice at the end of the essay on the existentialists—a philosophy always pragmatically close to immediate life concerns, functionally tied in with the "natural habitat" and "natural history" of meanings, hence relatively unspoiled by the phenomenological and idealist tradition of the European continent, and hence ready for the great job of reducing religious aspiration to something humanistically operable. But a style, as I have suggested, can be better than a program, no matter how closely that style is dramatized into the deeper meanings.

There are of course other sources of good American style in our day, though not so many as might be carelessly supposed. It would be too simple to say that Mr. Ransom has been anything like a stylistic mentor or model to all the members

of his talented team. Nevertheless I have described his style in part as a means of suggesting the norm of cunning eloquence which prevails in most of the volume. At the same time I think most of Mr. Ransom's contributors rely more than he on what Harold Whitehall, writing in this volume on Mencken, calls the American trait of *chromatic* or flamboyantly colored diction. I have no space to praise anyone else's style in detail, and will add only that Adrienne Monnier's retrospective "first French" reading of *Ulysses* comes close to being my one favorite essay in the volume, a modestly complete, daintily arched, tentative drama of a critical act.

Let me finally emphasize the whole matter of the shrewd *Kenyon* performance by pointing to what I consider a few lapses. In general the *Kenyon* writers who get into trouble seem to me the ones who let themselves try too hard to say something extraordinary. R. P. Blackmur, for instance, is a stylist who not only in his present essay on Mann's *Dr. Faustus* but often in more recent essays seems to me to gyrate off beyond certain lines of prose decency. The writing here, as always, is full of dazzling flashes; at the same time there is a good deal of thrashing around, flailing with tenuous phrases, and a kind of fiat pontification of meanings into existence.

"It may be that harmony is needed to create character, vital and cultural harmony, and that in a polyphonic age only parody of character and the individual is possible to express. Private life disappears into public life or into itself and is in either case, when expressed, only a parody of itself."

"Or into itself"? If you put it that way, I guess there is no way of challenging the thesis. Or behold the poor bourgeois in the following bold figure.

"Only the bourgeois understands Bohemia (his slipping) or needs the devil (his climbing); or at any rate, the bourgeois is in the gulf between his slipping and his pride—which is why he adapts to himself the notions of birth and breeding: that he may somehow reach irresponsibility and dishonor."

It is perhaps symptomatic enough of the *Kenyon* mind that some of its stylistic difficulties should occur when it comes to speak of the bourgeoisie and related socio-economic topics. Eric Bentley's essay on *Monsieur Verdoux* is one of the liveliest in the volume, but it is not improved by the author's confident reliance on such terms as "unplanned economy" and its implied opposite "planned economy" as touchstones of the serious norms of value around which the comedy is supposed to revolve. "Stockholder and speculator, polygamist and murderer." The sequence comes off so casually that one might think Mr. Bentley takes the movie for reality. Even in 1948 such mistakes might have seemed on reflection not so funny. In the same cold way Richard Chase writes about Faulkner, that is, with the air of a specialist reaching into a textbook for a set of key terms against which the literary work will be expected to measure up. "Faulkner goes along with Hightower on this point, assuming too much that a fantasy projected from some center of real causation is the cause itself." The paragraph from which I quote this sentence keeps up a far too steady clatter about "consciousness"—"failure of consciousness," "degree of consciousness," "associative consciousness." The term is not quite good enough to bear that much weight.

I am demanding a high level of expressive performance from the *Kenyon* critics, because, as Mr. Ransom says, they do try to say wonderfully hard things, and a great part of the time they succeed. Their expression deserves to be scrutinized with the greatest alertness a reader can muster. The kind of adverse notes which I have just ventured may be taken as both a compliment to the *Kenyon* critics and a warning to their readers. I would return always to my insistence that they are a school of highly accomplished writers and amateurs of the spirit. It would be a

great injustice to end a review of this book on anything but a note of earnest respect.

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Jean Giraudoux, Surrealism, and the German Romantic Ideal. By Laurence LeSage. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952. 80 p.

The aim of Mr. LeSage's study is to show the revival of romantic aesthetic ideals, mainly in the work of Jean Giraudoux, but also in the Surrealists and, on a broader basis, "in other modern voices." Accordingly his book is divided into three major parts: (1) Giraudoux and the German romantic authors, (2) the Surrealists, (3) a general view. It is unfortunately the case that Mr. LeSage's undertaking, doubtful at best, is rendered practically nugatory by his failure to define any of his terms. Instead he generalizes without stint, quotes to little purpose, contradicts himself frequently, and relies too often on secondary sources, not always either the best or the most recent.

In the first part of Chapter I Mr. LeSage describes Giraudoux's travels and studies, as well as the particular circumstances which brought him into contact with the works of the romanticists. This is done satisfactorily. But trouble commences when Mr. LeSage lets himself go on the subject of "Giraudoux and the Romantic Weltanschauung," which he introduces as follows: "For both J. Giraudoux and the German Romantics, poetry suggests first of all an attitude toward the universe, a characteristic Weltanschauung" (p. 5). What is this Weltanschauung? We are not told. And Mr. LeSage is equally reticent about such matters as "romanticism" and the "romantic ideal," which is unfortunate, considering the complexity of the Romantic Movement. As if the terms romanticism, Surrealism, realism, and others were not already shifty enough, Mr. LeSage gives them a range of application which very nearly deprives them of all meaning. So Kleist, Hebbel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche are all labelled romanticists, and there is hardly an important writer in modern French literature who is not either a Surrealist or a romanticist. This surely is generalization run wild. No less unhelpful is his habit of random quotation. He writes that "poetry, long considered as an agreeable pastime becomes [with romanticists] an instrument of metaphysical inquiry" (p. 9). How long and by whom, one would like to know. By Aristotle? Dante? Sidney? Again, Mr. LeSage writes: "Giraudoux's divulgences sound very similar to those of Schiller, the spiritual father of the Romantic generation" (p. 12). Since the romanticists were contemporaries of Schiller, it is not easy to see how he would have been their father, spiritual or not. Perhaps Mr. LeSage was thinking of the *Jungfrau von Orléans,* which Schiller called a "romantische Tragödie" or of Schiller lecturing in Jena at a time when the Schlegels attracted Novalis, Schelling, and Tieck; but he might have remembered that Schiller soon quarreled with the Schlegels and that he was never considered as a romanticist by the romanticists themselves. Another unhappy generalization is Mr. LeSage's statement that "it is not surprising that the romanticists would be little given to verse as a medium of expression" (p. 15). Anyone at all familiar with the German Romantic Movement will recognize the fact that, on the contrary, hardly another period shows a greater output of verse. Nor is Mr. LeSage on too firm ground in repeating after Goethe that form and formality were so inimical to Jean Paul "that [he] confessed he could never compose a single verse" (p. 15). Although J. Paul wrote little verse, there is a great deal of poetry interwoven in his prose. In this connection I cannot do better than refer to the critical work of E. Berend, especially his article on "Jean Pauls Gedichte" (*PMLA*, LVII, 183 ff.). And here

I may mention again that, despite Mr. LeSage's extreme reliance on secondary sources, he has not availed himself of the best. He quotes Ricarda Huch several times, but H. A. Korff's *Geist der Goethezeit* and "Wesen der Romantik" (*Zeitschr. f. d. deutsch. Unterricht*, XLIII), P. Kluckhohn's *Das Ideengut der deutschen Romantik* (1941), the important article by M. Honecker (*Philos. Jb.*, XLIX), and others go unmentioned.

Is it really the case that Brentano in *Godwi* "shows complete inability or indifference in the matter of creating a plot" (p. 16)? And what are we to make of the statement that Schlegel "attached [irony] to Fichte's doctrine of the sovereignty of the Free Spirit" (p. 26)? Is Mr. LeSage saying that Fichte influenced Schlegel? Yet Käte Friedeman in her excellent article, "Die romantische Ironie" (*Zeitschr. f. Aesthetik*, XIII, 270 ff.), denies such an influence on the ground that Schlegel in the fragments of the *Athenäum* never once mentions Fichte and irony together (cf. also Carl Enders, "Fichte und die Lehre von der romantischen Ironie," *Zeitschr. f. Aesthetik*, XIV, 279). Neither is it true, as Mr. LeSage asserts, that the Giraldician protagonist's soul is usually claimed by "the humble world of ordinary mortal life" and that "in Giraudoux as in Hoffmann, a healthy instinct brings him [the protagonist] back to reality" (p. 30). What about Elis Fröborn in the *Bergwerke zu Falun*? He is not brought back to reality; or, if he is, it is only after his corpse has lain preserved in vitriol for years; nor are Antonio and Annunziata, the central figures in *Doge und Dogaresse*, brought back to reality by a "healthy instinct." A storm at sea destroys them.

In the chapter called "Giraudoux's Plays and their German Predecessors," Mr. LeSage states that Fouqué created his *Undine* from a legend "recorded by an unknown author as early as the 14th century in a poem entitled 'Der Ritter von Staufenberg'" (p. 33). This is only partly true, for Fouqué's source was the *Liber de nymphis, sylphis ... et caetris spiritibus* in the collected works of Paracelsus, and the author of the poem was very probably Egenolf von Stauffenburg, who died between 1320 and 1324. Mr. LeSage goes on to say that "three of Giraudoux's plays have direct antecedents from the pen of German romantic writers" (p. 33), among which he lists Kleist's *Amphytrion*, Hebbel's *Judith*, and Fouqué's *Undine*. We do not get very far by classifying Kleist and Hebbel as romanticists. And to call Hebbel's play "colorless and conventional" (p. 25), even by comparison with Giraudoux's play of the same title, means little and betrays some imperceptiveness. Further, Mr. LeSage says that "although enormously rich in theories the German Romantic school is comparatively poor in works" (p. 36). Yet Kleist and Hebbel, to mention only these, produced a respectable number of plays, and other works besides.

Not only is the first chapter of Mr. LeSage's book full of doubtful statements, but the writing is often turgid and incoherent (pp. 6, 10, 12, 15, 18, 20, 21, 24, etc.). Unfortunately, too, his quotations are not always exact, nor are the claims he bases upon them always acceptable. For example, he argues that "the lofty conception of art and the belief that the artist is a sort of prophet" (p. 9) appeared in "modern French literature with Rimbaud (Il faut être voyant)" (p. 10). The contention will not hold water. What about Nerval, Baudelaire, Lautréamont? And the quotation should read: "Je dis qu'il faut être Voyant, se faire Voyant" (Rimbaud, letter to Izambard, May 13, 1871).

Mr. LeSage's chapter on Surrealism is interesting and informative, though Surrealism is not as simple a movement as he appears to think. And he is disposed to take the movement more seriously than most of its members did themselves, forgetting its artificiality and oversophistication, to counter which was at least one of the aims of Aragon's *Traité du style*. Nor should the fact be forgotten that Surrealism had its greatest success in fields other than literature, and that

for more than a quarter of a century Surrealist writers have not produced a single prose work of high distinction. In poetry Paul Eluard's *Capitale de la douleur* (1926) and *L'Amour la poésie* (1929) alone stand out, and it is doubtful whether these two collections can be called Surrealistic poetry. All of which should have prevented Mr. LeSage from stating that "poetry supplanted science and speculation as a means of highest knowledge" (p. 42), especially as Breton himself says that "le surréalisme n'est pas un moyen d'expression nouveau, ou plus facile, ni même une métaphysique de la poésie."

As one might expect, Mr. LeSage has difficulty in establishing "affinities" and "links" between German romanticism and Surrealism. For that matter it is not quite clear just what relationship he is trying to establish. On the one hand, he rightly states that "Breton's admiration for Arnim" constituted a "personal [?] bond between the two schools" (p. 38) and that, by adopting Gérard de Nerval as patron, the Surrealists forged a "historical link with German Romanticism and established a sort of genealogy" (p. 38). This was demonstrated by A. Béguin, a well-informed critic of both Nerval and German romanticism. On the other hand, Mr. LeSage says that "Surrealism did not ... owe its initial orientation to German inspiration" (p. 38). Yet nowhere does he point out the fundamental differences between the two movements, differences which are considerable, as for example that in connection with the problem of tradition. It is not only that Breton misjudges Lautréamont's role in relation to Surrealism; but in making Breton's point of view his own, Mr. LeSage fails to grasp the essential significance of Lautréamont. The words he quotes, presumably from the *Chants de Maldoror*, hardly demonstrate that "unification of the universe" (p. 47) which the Surrealists attempted to achieve by way of "metaphor." Nor is anything gained by the quotations from Novalis, which are coupled with that from the *Chants de Maldoror*, since there is not only a fundamental difference in attitude between Novalis and Lautréamont but also between Lautréamont and the Surrealists. And this is so even though the poetic claim manifest in the *Chants de Maldoror* corresponds in some measure to the aims which Breton professed, fifty years later, in the *Manifeste du surréalisme*, particularly those in regard to the unification of the universe ("La résolution ... de ces deux états ... que sont le rêve et la réalité, en une sorte de réalité absolue, de surréalité." *Manifeste du surréalisme*, Paris, 1924, p. 23). At bottom the Surrealism of Breton is characterized by an optimistic attitude (cf. *Second Manifeste*, Paris 1930, p. 11), while the attitude of Lautréamont is profoundly pessimistic. In his view man has no choice between worlds; nor is he free to organize either his life or his actions according to his will. Such freedom is the creator's alone, a creator whose authority he never doubts, despite his hero's constant attacks upon him.

According to Mr. LeSage the Surrealists looked down upon "the novel ... as an inferior genre and a sign of decadence" (p. 57). How, then, is one to account for the addiction of Aragon, Breton, and others to novel writing? And why such extravagant praise of *Nadja*, which it is no longer possible to consider either as the expression of "prophetic dreams" or of the "merveilleux of Hoffmann or Arnim" (p. 44); it is rather a Surrealistic routine which will hardly bear reading today.

In this chapter as in the others generalities abound and inconsistencies are not uncommon (pp. 42-45, 42-43, 49-50, 56, etc.). One of these generalities is worth commenting upon. Mr. LeSage says: "The importance of the poet as a conscious factor in his poetry, which we have observed diminishing since German Romanticists abdicated in favor of inspiration and trance, reached its minimum with Surrealism" (p. 58). Yet so excellent a critic as Thibaudet says of Mallarmé that "he is more occupied with the fact of poetry than with the object of poetry." Mr.

LeSage ignores this fact about Mallarmé and proceeds in his third chapter to expand his own questionable views, if expand is the word; for in that chapter (where, it may be remarked, nearly everybody and everything in modern French literature is found to have affinities with the German Romantic Movement) the view is both asserted and denied. So I shall not enlarge here upon Platen, Nietzsche, George, Mallarmé, Gide, Césaire, Pound, Eliot, Auden in regard to the above statement; but a word or two about Valéry is in order. "Gide, Valéry . . . ," Mr. LeSage writes, "are all given to remarks of ideological pretension unsustained by logical justification, proof, reference, even discussion" (p. 69). This is simply not true, even if Julien Benda says so and Mr. LeSage repeats it after him. Valéry himself (and the Parnassians as well) opposed the idea of "trance," as his remarks on "La Jeune Parque" (*Revue de France*, Sept. 1927, pp. 342 ff.) show, and also his address, "La Poésie" (1927), in *Léonard et les philosophes* (1929). Valéry invokes the gods against the prophetic impulse: "Les dieux nous gardent du désir prophétique" ("Littérature," *NRF*, XXVI, 1926, 674), and this in contrast to Breton's words: "Automatisme psychique pur par lequel on se propose d'exprimer, soit verbalement, soit par écrit, soit de toute autre manière, le fonctionnement réel de la poésie. Dictée de la pensée, en l'absence de tout contrôle exercé par la raison" (*Manifeste du surréalisme*, 1924, p. 24).

Mr. LeSage's third chapter, "A General View," contains some doubtful generalizations. The fact that these have a measure of truth makes them all the more misleading. He says that "existentialism is patently an outgrowth of Germanic thought" (p. 64). Is the matter as patent as all that? Mr. LeSage goes on to say that Kierkegaard was influenced by the philosophical and literary theories arising out of the point of view of the German romanticists. But what precisely is this point of view? And what, moreover, are its philosophic and literary consequences? And since Mr. LeSage never answers such questions, or even appears to think that they need an answer, his statements concerning Kierkegaard's sources and affiliations fail to throw much light on the subject. Nor is Mr. LeSage content to indulge in doubtful generalizations of his own; he has a habit of quoting the doubtful generalizations of others. And very often the two are not even consistent with each other. With regard to this very subject of existentialism, he approvingly quotes Philip Blair Rice (p. 64), according to whom existentialism is not only a modification of German romanticism, but a break with it. What is one to make of all this? Again Mr. LeSage speaks of the romantic dogma of subjectivism (p. 67) and adds that "Gide, Proust, Valéry admit only solipsistic knowledge" (p. 67). Now, apart from the fact that subjectivism is a variously interpretable word, it is highly unhelpful nonsense to say that Gide, Proust, and Valéry are solipsists, let alone that they only accept solipsistic knowledge; for solipsistic knowledge is a contradiction in terms. Here as throughout the book Mr. LeSage is depending largely on secondary sources from which he has gleaned tags and labels whose relevance, if any, is of the remotest. One of the chief of these secondary sources, Julien Benda, upon whom (as already noted) Mr. LeSage leans far too much, is notoriously tendentious.

We cannot help concluding that it is as if Mr. LeSage were determined to spread a darkness where there had only been a fog before. "In spite of the inherent dangers and difficulties in the subject," he writes, "I have felt that reference to the German Romantics would help clarify the picture of recent literature" (p. 80). This is precisely what Mr. LeSage has failed to do. "Clarify" here is certainly the wrong word.

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L'Œuvre de Mallarmé: Un Coup de dés. By Robert Greer Cohn. Paris: Librairie Les Lettres, 1951. 495 p.

If we believe with Heidegger that man (though himself part of the great all-encompassing Being) is the "here" of Being and that through language, which sets man apart from all other creatures, this Being, the ground of all that is, comes to light and receives existence and historical significance; if we believe with Kierkegaard that the poet is the live telegraph between the universe and ordinary man—then language, and poetic language in particular, has a function surpassing that of a mere means of communication between human beings; then the word itself is endowed with primordial wisdom and its form and sound conceal mysteries that can be fathomed only by poet-priests in reverent search for etymon, connotation, and meaning. This attitude towards language which we associate today predominantly with Heidegger, who has both articulated and practiced it in his philosophical and critical writings, is already to be found in the works of Mallarmé and Joyce, who reserve a place of honor for the etymon, the pun, the syllable or word divested of its familiar appearance and seen in either pristine splendor or crudeness.

Mallarmé's obsession with the significance of the word is, of course, documented not only by his poetic creations but by the theories he evolved in his various writings and letters and most of all in his treatise, *Les Mots anglais*. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Heidegger referring in his own correspondence to a passage from one of Mallarmé's letters (May 14, 1867 from Besançon) in which the poet stated: "C'est t'apprendre que je suis maintenant impersonnel, et non plus Stéphane, que tu as connu, mais une aptitude qu'a l'univers spirituel à se voir et à se développer à travers ce que fut moi."[1]

It is the great merit of Cohn's recent exegesis of Mallarmé's poem, *Un Coup de dés*, to have presented the French poet not as an isolated though lovable eccentric whom "on n'explique pas . . . , on le sent et on l'aime,"[2] but as one of the significant writers of our time who have sensed the primordial mystery concealed in language and have struggled and searched in order to reveal it. To my knowledge, R. G. Cohn is the first critic of Mallarmé to call attention, for instance, to the resemblance that exists in this respect between Mallarmé and Joyce—a resemblance which can hardly be attributed to influence (for Joyce, though referring to Mallarmé in his discussion of *Hamlet* in *Ulysses*, does not show great familiarity with the French poet's work), but seems rather to have grown out of a kindred yearning to overcome the positivistic fragmentation of reality.

Fully aware of Mallarmé's serious conception of language, R. G. Cohn tackles again the problem of *Un Coup de dés* and repeats some of the questions that others have asked before him but have answered too superficially, too glibly perhaps: What is the meaning of this strange creation, this pictogram, completed shortly before his death by a man who dreamed of compressing a whole cosmogony into a poem? Why does it sprawl across the pages, itself as mysterious as a throw of the die, and challenge probers while merely annoying those who cling to the comfort of what is undisturbingly familiar? After sounding the depths of Mallarmé's poetic intention concerning both the meaning and the form of the poem, Cohn concurs with the poet's own opinion that *Un Coup de dés* is his masterpiece, which not only by virtue of its content but by its form alone evokes the whole universe. For even in form it abandons the two-dimensionality that we ordinarily associate

[1] Quoted by Egon Vietta, *Die Seinsfrage bei Martin Heidegger* (Stuttgart, 1950), p. 39.

[2] See, for instance, Edmond Bonniot's preface to *Igitur* in Stéphane Mallarmé, *Œuvres complètes* (Paris, 1945), p. 431.

with the printed word and page, as—varying in size and style of type—phrases leap forward or draw the reader's eye into imaginary depths, thus creating a complicated three-dimensional pattern, a wave movement that seems in harmony not only with the rhythm of sound and phrase but with the eternal patterns of the universe: light-dark-light, up-down-up.

Those who have read R. G. Cohn's earlier book on the subject, published in English in the Yale French Studies in 1949 and entitled *Mallarmé's Un Coup de dés: An Exegesis*, know how much erudition and acumen to expect from this critic. The subject matter of the earlier book is entirely incorporated in this new venture at interpretation (translated into French by René Arnaud). However, the additional pages in no way give the impression of sheer bulk. Rather they represent new analytical and factual data as well as original thought, which complement and deepen the initial study.

After a preface dealing quite mercilessly with his predecessors, Cohn presents his exegesis in two parts, the first discussing the syntax of the poem and the second providing a detailed analysis of the ideogram represented by each page or double-page. These two parts are followed by a rapid conclusion, a number of appendices supplying factual information, and a bibliography. (I find it regrettable that the first of the appendices, entitled "Quelques perspectives sur l'épistémologie mallarméenne," which is entirely original, was relegated to this place outside the exegesis proper. It deserves rather to be an integral part thereof.) The detailed analysis alone comprises 300-odd pages and is, of course, strangely disproportionate to the eleven pages of the poem with their scattered word constellations. This very elaborateness of interpretation reminds one of Biblical and Aristotelian commentaries and makes at times, as Cohn himself realizes, for slow and awkward reading. It is fully justified, however, because it recognizes Mallarmé's intention to present in this poem "l'explication orphique de la terre"—though the work's significance was minimized by his contemporaries and even his closest friends, and though Mallarmé himself realized that he had not quite succeeded in what he had set out to do.

In Cohn's view the ideogram of each page puts before us, in addition to its more obvious pictorial significance, a metaphysical thought at which we have to arrive through careful analysis, and he labels each page, accordingly (1) "La Création," (2) "Le Temps et l'espace," (3) "L'Univers physique," (4) "L'Homme," (5) "L'Enfant: l'histoire," (6) "L'Art et le rituel," (7) "L'Artiste: le théâtre," (8) "Le Poète moderne," (9) "Le Poème," (10) "Retour à l'océan," (11) "La Constellation." Such titles indicate a definitely metaphysical concern. But one is rather at a loss when one tries to apply them actually to the corresponding pages of the poem, and one wonders whether they do not express Cohn's thoughts rather than those of Mallarmé. What justification is there in calling the first page "La Création" when it merely displays in bold letters the legend "Un Coup de dés"? Logically speaking, none. These words as such are without meaning. To turn them into a complete grammatical statement, other words would have to be added, and additional thought would be necessary to give this grammatical statement the meaning of "creation." Such considerations, however, occur to us only because we have been trained to see language as a tool of "logic" and as bound inseparably to the laws of grammar. Mallarmé's conception of language being different, it has to be understood on his own terms. That is precisely what R. G. Cohn tries to do.

Following Mallarmé's lead, he delves into the etymology of words and parts of words as well as into their sound-values and their connotations in popular speech and in the poet's own writings. He makes us see as a consequence that the "Un" of this first page suggests the original "one," the creator. "Coup" evokes the violent initial act of creation, a sudden burst of light (a connotation still con-

tained in the popular expression that a blow can make one "see stars"). The etymon of "dé" is *datum* (that which is given) : the world, life. Thus the picture of a creator who with one sudden throw brings forth life is actually evoked by the brief Mallarméan phrase. Cohn proceeds with equal skill in his analysis of the subsequent pages of the poem and, although one may, at times, disagree with his interpretations, his method clearly establishes that Mallarmé's use of language is based on a connotative and intuitive rather than a rational transmission of thought—but thought is present and does not lack depth, for all its disregard of "logic."

But Cohn's analysis does not end here. He points out—and substantiates his findings by quoting Mallarmé's own statements—the intricate vowel and consonant symbolism which is to be found in the French poet's writings and which is based mainly on the universal contrasts: up and down, light and dark, spring and summer, fall and winter, male and female. This element adds another complexity to the poetic language and often accounts for the position of a certain word, which, through its symbolic dualism, corresponds to the rhythm of the waves and the changing seasons and supersedes the laws of grammar. Certain words carry within them a basic male or female meaning, and certain sounds correspond to either light or darkness. But such values are not absolute; neighboring words may shift them or alter them altogether. Thus the word *coup* in the initial phrase, which by its implication of aggressiveness should be classified as male, belongs by virtue of its sound to the realm of darkness, the female, and can be relegated to that realm by the mere addition of a final *e* (*coupe* is an obviously female symbol) or by the fact that it is followed by the brightly masculine *dés*. The duality of sound and word symbol thus established in the poem is, as Cohn correctly points out, a universal one which can be found in ancient Chinese philosophy as well as in tribal mythologies. Word symbolism has also been discussed by Freud, whose remarks on gender are perhaps the first sensible attempt at an explanation of that most puzzling of problems.

The recognition of this dualism must precede any real understanding of Mallarmé's poetic creation. It pervades not only the interplay of sounds and sound connotations, but is responsible for the very arrangement of the words on the page and thus ultimately accounts for the poem's three-dimensionality. For the rhythm of reading, beginning on the first page and ending on the last, is one of time—though not of meter—and moves, therefore, on a horizontal plane in an undulatory motion from light to dark and to light again. Yet the horizontal axis thus established is cut by another which leads into the depth of the book, depending on the boldness or timidity of print. This axis has obviously a spatial character and moves in accordance with the meaning of phrases or rather their relative importance in the meaning of the whole. The entire arrangement thus illustrates the duality between space and time, bringing into focus this particular metaphysical problem, in addition to the themes of each separate pictogram.

If one returns to the realm of philosophical terminology, moreover, one finds that the poem centers around such concepts as "le paradoxe," "le jeu," and "l'absurde," and that these ideas are contained in the title itself, which is not merely attached to the poem but, as its key phrase, runs through it from the beginning to almost the end in the boldest print. "Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard" suggests, of course, "jeu" as well as "hasard" and in its tautology contains the absurd and the paradoxal. For, as Cohn reminds us, *hasard* comes from the Arabic word *az-zahr,* which means either dice or a sort of dice game, so that the line actually reads: "Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le coup de dés," recalling Mallarmé's earlier statement in his *Igitur*: "il y a et il n'y a pas le hasard." Such plays on words—used by Joyce in similar manner—which convey startlingly and

sometimes wittily a philosophical or psychological insight that has its own "logic," reveal the poet as belonging to that particular philosophical climate that developed in Europe with Kierkegaard and Nietzsche—the increasing awareness of the limits of rationality and the consequent acceptance of paradox and the absurd, which is also to be found in Hermann Brock, Samuel Beckett, and Kafka.

R. G. Cohn has shown admirable restraint in refraining from labeling Mallarmé an existentialist, great though the temptation must have been. For to apply to the French poet this term in the sense in which Sartre has used it would be misleading indeed. Although Sartre has chosen to present his philosophy in plays and novels, since philosophical treatises which appeal entirely to rationalistic thought cannot completely grapple with the live problem of human existence, he would be unable, I should think, to accept the tenets of Mallarméan poetry. To Sartre, always conscious of man's intersubjectivity, the problem of writing is one of communication between human beings, and the words used to establish this communication should be as free as possible from any additional connotations, as he maintains in his treatise on literature. The poet, on the other hand, treats words as physical objects, as pieces of colored glass which he can fit into his mosaic, and, according to Sartre, uses language in a secondary, not to say in a false, fashion. In view of all this, it is piquant to learn that Sartre is at present engaged in a study of Mallarmé.

Yet we should not overlook the great resemblance which is apparent between Mallarmé's approach to the word and that of existential thinkers more mystically inclined than Sartre. Whether we use the word existentialism or avoid it altogether, the Mallarméan "univers spirituel," of which he thought himself the impersonal "aptitude" wherein it reflected itself, obviously corresponds to the Heideggerian concept of the Being-poet relationship—through the poet Being utters itself and acquires historical existence. We are reminded of the lines in Jorge Guillén's "Más allá":

> "La realidad me inventa,
> Soy su leyenda . . . Salve!"

There is apparent here an insistence on that impersonality which is found in the Zen Buddhist philosophy, the notion that he who has understood Zen is passive activity or active passivity—Zen speaks and works through him. Thus French poet and German thinker, Spanish poet and Japanese seer, are in agreement on the one ground from which each one's life work springs and they all turn towards that same ground in their search for philosophic or poetic truth. It is in the course of that search that both Heidegger and Mallarmé have hewn paths through the thicket of everyday language in order to reveal its roots and have tried to convey thought in its intuitive complexity rather than on the unilateral rational level. If Mallarmé is startling as a poet who tried to evoke an entire cosmogony in a poem, Heidegger staggers us by instilling the poet's approach towards language into his philosophy. Both writers confront us with obscurities because of the very density of connotation and implication, because of the newness of words that, cleansed of the grime which centuries have left upon them, appear again in all their strength. But this obscurity is not the result of whim and arbitrariness. Rather it allows new insights, once the initial difficulty has been overcome. It seems to become an ever-stronger characteristic of writers who feel that the easy flow, the gush of language with which society floods us, has cheapened the word, and that it is the poet's task to restore it to its pristine truth.

Cohn's book has the double merit of proposing an ingenious, profound, and generally acceptable interpretation of Mallarmé's supremely difficult poem, and of illuminating the poet's fundamental insight, so that we perceive it, not as an isolated

and personal notion, but as at one with a conviction or vision which, transcending individual ego-centeredness, affirms our share in that "something far more deeply interfused."

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ESPRONCEDA Y LORD BYRON. By Esteban Pujals. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1951. ix, 510 p.

This is one of the first comparative studies written in Spain, an ambitious and worthwhile contribution to the problems inherent in the relationship between Byron and Espronceda.

Pujals has carefully examined the biographies, as well as the literature, of both men. He divides his book into three parts: "Biografías," "Obras," and "Estudio Comparado," the last of which is by far the most meritorious portion of the study. Part I, the biographies, offers nothing new in the way of additional material or fresh interpretation, while Part II presents merely a summary of themes.

At the outset, Pujals states that his aim is to combat what he considers the tendency among English and Spanish critics to subordinate to Byron the work and personality of Espronceda. To him, the Spaniard is an original poet of the first order, whose merit is belittled if we call him an imitator of the Englishman.

Actually there is nothing new or startling in this position. Critics have been affirming this, with some exceptions like Fitzmaurice Kelly, for more than half a century. One may refer to Roque Barcia, as early as 1881, or Valera in 1890, or Cascales y Muñoz in 1914, as champions of Espronceda's originality. In brief, one is not to look in this book for a new concept of the Spaniard's relationship to the English poet, but for a substantiation, through a comprehensive study, of what Pujal's predecessors have been voicing now for a long time.

Pujal's method is the comparative study of the themes utilized by both poets and their distinctive treatment of these themes. He examines their respective attitudes towards country, love, family, friendship, the past, and nature. Some of these themes have been outlined before, but never with the thoroughness and amplitude with which Pujals makes his points.

As for country, he proves that, despite his criticisms, Byron loved England no less than Espronceda loved Spain.

Their similar opinion of women was qualified by their different reactions to failure with the fair sex. Here Pujals accepts the outworn notion that Astarte in *Manfred* represents Mary Chaworth. One seems to be on safer ground in pointing to Augusta Leigh, whom Pujals rejects as Byron's paramour and includes under "family." Espronceda's treatment of women in *El Diablo mundo*, in Pujal's view, contains much the same personal note that characterizes "A Jarifa" and "A Teresa," with an added element of philosophy. Though critics have seen the influence of Byron in "A Jarifa," this seems valid only as a reflection of the general romantic theme of feminine perfidy popularized in Spain at the time by Byron.

Pujals devotes much space to the themes of the past and nature. It is perhaps by a study of these two themes in both poets that one may see most readily how they differed. Byron's main use of the past are his evocations of ancient and mediaeval glories, as witnessed by *Childe Harold* and some of his plays such as *Marino Faliero* and *Sardanapalus*. But Pujals disregards these major efforts in order to concentrate on minor compositions taken from *The Hours of Idleness*

and *Miscellaneous Poems*. He points out that Espronceda was rather impervious to the sentiment of the past; yet the difference in the personalities of both men could have been brought out clearly by the direct contrast between Byron's treatment of ancient Rome and Greece, or mediaeval Venice, and Espronceda's early and ephemeral interest in Walter Scott's feudalism, as expressed by two minor poems and "Sancho Saldaña."

Nature too is one of Byron's greatest themes, but is lacking in basic appeal to Espronceda. As Pujals accurately points out, the Spaniard viewed the outdoors mainly as décor. Romantic nature is to be found, he affirms, only in the second half of "Oscar y Malvina," a meditation like Byron's apostrophe to the Ocean in *Childe Harold*. But Byron's influence also affected "La canción del pirata." Pujals rightly combats Churchman's view that this poem is an imitation of *The Corsair*. Yet neither critic has recognized that the pirate's love of the ocean parallels that of Childe Harold in Canto IV; the swashbuckling corsair identifies himself completely with the stormy, rebellious mood of nature.

Chapter XVI, "Ideas," covers morality, society, and politics. Pujals shows that Espronceda here has certain points of contact with Byron, but that he remains more incredulous and pessimistic than the Englishman. His expressions of grief evince a pungency and bitterness he was never able to dilute as Byron did in the *Don Juan* digressions. The section entitled "La Sociedad" is important, since rebellion against the social order was an article of the romantic creed. After tracing minutely the antisocial attitude of both poets, Pujals shows that, while Byron sought solitude, Espronceda concentrated upon protest. The political attitude of both poets, he declares, was characterized by war against tyranny at home and aggression abroad. Yet, though a liberated Greece became firmly associated with the name of Byron, Pujals quotes almost a full page from "La despedida del patriota griego" without once mentioning Byron's unquestioned influence on this theme and sentiment.

In Chapter XVII, "Creencias," Pujals characterizes Byron as a skeptic, with nuances of atheism. On the other hand, he insists, Espronceda was a good Catholic; the Satanic figure of Montemar in *El estudiante de Salamanca* must be approached with caution, lest one form an exaggerated opinion of Espronceda's irreverence. Here Pujals should have consulted L. Santalice's detailed study of the subject (1931). Professor Angel del Río, in his history of Spanish literature (1949), summarizes the threefold aspect of the poem wherein Byron's role is definitely accounted for: "En él sintetiza el espíritu nacional con lo personal de su lirismo y la actitud byroniana" (II, 74).

As for *El diablo mundo*, Pujals says, if Espronceda coincides with Byron in skepticism, he was much more energetic and aggressive than the Englishman in expressing his doubts about God and immortality; this statement, however, cannot be readily reconciled with Pujal's insistence upon Espronceda's impeccable Catholicism. The answer lies in Espronceda's use of Byronism, if only as a literary vogue foreign to his real religious beliefs.

Chapter XVIII treats "life and death" and "the poet." After a detailed presentation, Pujals concludes that both men formed the same concept of life as an illusion. His quotations reveal nothing but general thematic analogies, attributable to the literary vogue of the period. As for "death," there is certainly no evidence to show that Espronceda was in any way influenced by Byron's use of the topic. As Pujals aptly points out, the Spaniard's finest treatment of the theme is the personification of Death as the "isla de reposo" in *El diablo mundo*. Mazzei has shown that the inspiration of Espronceda's verses here was Chateaubriand's *Atala*, in the passage beginning: "Je crus que c'était la vierge des derniers amours . . . "

Pujals next scrutinizes satire and humor (Chapter XIX). He believes that the humor of *Don Juan* is unquestionably Byron's predominant characteristic, possessing a real and permanent literary value. But one cannot say the same for Espronceda. It is to be regretted that Pujals was unaware of Angela Hämel's *Der Humor bei José de Espronceda* (1922), which treats similar material and calls the Spaniard's humor bitter, satirical, and artificial. Barja, too, considered Espronceda as devoid of real humor. Pujals comes to the same conclusions, but does not examine the parallelisms previously studied by Churchman, Brereton, and Mazzei, who felt that some of the satrical disgressions and incidents in *El diablo mundo* were suggestive of *Don Juan.*

Chapter XXI, a comparison of the work of the two poets as a whole, is divided into (1) "Valoración" and (2) "Influencia." In the first section Pujals evaluates in detail the respective merit of each poet. He insists that Espronceda outranks Byron as a lyrical poet and considers *El estudiante de Salamanca* superior to anything Byron ever wrote (pp. 437-438). On the other hand, Pujals prefers Byron in the field of epic poetry and adjudges *Don Juan* superior to *El diablo mundo,* a decision that will not prove too difficult of ratification by most critics. After suggesting that Espronceda excels Byron in his portrayals in realism, Pujals discusses the dramas of each and goes on to admit the Englishman's superiority in nature descriptions. He thinks Byron is more philosophic and Espronceda more artistic in his medium of expression. This entire section on the comparative merits of the two poets is interesting and stimulating, regardless of whether we agree with the author's observations. On the other hand, the section on influences, which would require considerable informative material, is too ambitious in scope and all too sketchy.

In Chapter XXII, dealing with artistry, style, and imagery, Pujals seeks to prove Byron more careless and less harmonious in his verses than Espronceda; yet he thinks that both will be more generally esteemed than Bécquer, Shelley, or Keats! He also indicates how Espronceda's style affects the muse of Rubén Darío, Manuel Machado, and Dámaso Alonso. Byron's images, he thinks, are more selective, profound in conception, and rich in poetical content, while those of Espronceda are more graceful, brilliant, and suggestive. The Spaniard's imagery has been studied in Roberts' *The Epithet in Spanish Romanticism* (1936), which Pujals should have consulted.

The final chapter reverts, surprisingly enough, to influences, and deals with those poems or passages in Espronceda's works that have at times been termed imitations. Had Pujals read this reviewer's article, "Some Spanish Romantic Debts of Espronceda," *HR,* XVI (1948), 157-162, he would have known that "A una estrella" (1836) was derived from José Bermúdez de Castro's "Una estrella misteriosa," which appeared in *El Artista* (1835). Elsewhere[1] this reviewer has shown that Espronceda also knew Lamartine's "Le Soir" (one of the *Méditations poétiques*) and that, aside from the first few lines, only vague suggestions of Byron's "Sun of the Sleepless" are evident in Espronceda's poem.

The bibliography is composed of "Obras Generales" and a separate section each for critical works and editions of the two poets. There is no attempt at completeness. For example, we may add to the editions of the Spaniard's works *Poesías de Espronceda* (Barcelona, ed. Maucci, n.d.).The selected list of critical studies is representative. The real defect is the neglect of non-Spanish works, especially those published in the United States.

Pujals' deficiencies include a lack of logical organization, failure to study

[1] "Fuentes de 'A una estrella' de Espronceda," *Horizontes: revista trimestral de cultura* (San Juan, P.R., July 1941).

Manfred, and failure to consider in his study the previous works investigating the Byronic influences. But these shortcomings are more than redeemed by real merits. He traces and thoroughly elaborates for the first time the themes, sentiments, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes, together with their sundry nuances and ramifications, that characterize the two controversial figures. He shows, beyond any doubt, the intrinsic differences between the two poets. His work is important in demonstrating that an examination of relationship is only one aspect of the problem of gauging a writer's originality, and that an adequate study must also include those factors that make for personality and art. This type of investigation has been conspicuously lacking in previous studies of the two poets, and Pujals' volume helps to fill the lacuna with a solid investigation.

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RUSSIA, POLAND AND THE WEST: ESSAYS IN LITERARY AND CULTURAL HISTORY. By Wacław Lednicki. New York: Roy Publishers, 1954. 419 p.

Mr. Lednicki, professor of Russian literature at the University of California, has collected a number of his studies on Russian-Polish literary and cultural relations in a large handsome volume. The center of the book (pp. 133-348) is a discussion of Dostoevsky. This is preceded by two essays, largely devoted to Chaadaev and Tyuchev, while a final essay discusses Alexander Blok. All the chapters show Mr. Lednicki's great erudition, his close knowledge of Russian and Polish literature, and his skill in making ingenious and surprising connections. He seems right in arguing that Chaadaev must be the subject of a fragmentary poem by Pushkin depicting a Russian Polonophil; he argues convincingly that a poem by Tyuchev ostensibly attacking the Decembrists is rather ambiguous as to his attitude; and he collects much evidence for Blok's Polish interests, relations, and friends. But frequently Mr. Lednicki indulges in far-fetched conjectures. He has his theory for the method. "Comparativism proves little and seldom leads to any concrete results . . . the charm of comparativism lies precisely in its character of literary speculation" (p. 105). But he yields to this charm rather too often: we are told that Chaadaev might have met Mickiewicz (p. 36), and might have discussed certain ideas with him (p. 47), that Lermontov could have been acquainted with a specific poem of Mickiewicz (p. 67), that Mickiewicz might have known a poem by Tyuchev, though it was published in 1881 (p. 131), etc., etc. Mr. Lednicki relies mainly on verbal and thematic parallels which, however, are often so tenuous and vague that they cannot be said to constitute proof. To give an example of a parallel from the generally convincing chapter on Blok: in Blok's poem "Retribution" a mythological Mr. Frost "rushes" about Warsaw, while in Pushkin's poem, "The Bronze Horseman," the ghostly rider "leaped" after Evgeny in Petersburg (see p. 382). In one case a personification of Winter is spoken of, in the other a statue has come to life in the distraught imagination of Pushkin's hero. No verbal similarity exists; the two passages have nothing in common except that something is moving swiftly about the streets of two different towns.

While Mr. Lednicki preserves some feeling for the weight of evidence in these other essays, those on Dostoevsky are seriously vitiated by his political preoccupations. One can share his dislike for Dostoevsky's political views: he shows that Dostoevsky had apocalyptic visions of the decline of the West, prophesied the coming victory of the Russian Orthodox empire, and hated Poland and the Poles. All this is true, though in detail Mr. Lednicki presses the case

against Dostoevsky very hard indeed. Thus we are told that Fetukevich, the defense attorney in the trial of Dmitri Karamazov, is a caricature of a Polish lawyer, Spasowicz. The prosecutor is supposed to allude maliciously to his being a Catholic and Pole when he charges him with calling Christ "only the crucified lover of humanity, in opposition to all orthodox Russia" (quoted on p. 292). But obviously the point of the prosecutor's charge against Fetukevich is not Catholicism but his denying the divinity of Christ. Nothing at all is said about his being Polish, and the criticism of the prosecutor (who cannot be identified with Dostoevsky) would be just as damaging against a Catholic. In another context a "painful and even macabre explanation" (p. 281) is suggested for the fact that in *Uncle's Dream* the senile prince reminisces, quite casually, about a Polish impostor who danced the Cracoviana and broke his leg. This is supposed to be explained by a remark about a Pole in *The House of the Dead* who was brought into the ward of the prison hospital as a lunatic and there began dancing. The only similarity between these two passages is that in both a Pole is dancing.

Even less convincing is the argument which is to establish Mickiewicz's influence on Dostoevsky, so important an influence that Mr. Lednicki thinks that Dostoevsky had "every reason to hide his source of inspiration" (p. 342). No external evidence is offered; "everything is here hypothetical" (p. 342). Passages from Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve* are quoted which are claimed to be the inspiration for Ivan's argument against God's providence in the chapter of the *Brothers* entitled "Pro and Contra." But no concrete similiarity whatever is established; Ivan's arguments themselves are familiar enough, derivative from the huge literature of romantic titanism (see, for instance, Václav Černý, *Essai sur le titanisme dans la poésie romantique*, Prague, 1935). This quite vague general parallel is buttressed by even more tenuous proofs of other supposed borrowings. Thus a parallel is established between Mickiewicz's poem, "The Monument of Peter the Great," and an entry (never used) in Dostoevsky's notebooks for *The Possessed* (p. 302). But if one examines the imagery and metaphors which Mr. Lednicki considers "exactly the same," one will observe that Mickiewicz speaks of the Falconet *monument* of Peter the Great as a "frozen *waterfall* which the *Sun* of Liberty will *melt*," while Dostoevsky speaks of the Petrine *reform* as a *stone* standing on its side which the first *wind* will *topple* over. The similarity is merely that both had the commonplace idea that there was something unstable in the state of Russia. Just as unconvincing is the argument that, because Dostoevsky drew doodles of Gothic ornaments in his notebooks, he might have read a specific edition of Mickiewicz which has a Gothic design on the title page (p. 302). And why should Mr. Lednicki drag in a poem by Mickiewicz where a gendarme whacks a driver, because, in his *Diary* of 1876, Dostoevsky remembers witnessing a similar scene in his youth (pp. 308-309)? According to Mr. Lednicki, everything must have a printed source, preferably in Pushkin or Mickiewicz.

On the whole, Mr. Lednicki grossly overrates the role of Polish figures and allusions in Dostoevsky's fictional writings. Whatever Dostoevsky may have said as a political journalist, in the novels Poles are only marginal figures of fun or occasional stage villains, just as foreigners are frequent butts of satire and merriment in all literature. The Germans in *The Gambler* or Mrs. Lippewechsel in *Crime and Punishment* do not come off much better. In the context of Dostoevsky's novels, which swarm with grotesque louts, impostors, and criminals, most of them Russians, a few rascally foreigners seem quite in keeping. There is nothing sinister in the fact that Dostoevsky drew the name (and probably only the name) of the pitiful Mr. Musaliowicz, the improbable first lover of Grushenka, from a fellow prisoner whom he had known almost thirty

years earlier in Siberia (p. 286), or that he dismisses Aglaya in the *Idiot* by marrying her off to a false Polish count. The Poles in *The House of the Dead* are depicted more favorably, since the book is not grotesque fiction but sober *reportage*. The "revelations" (p. 277)—Mr. Lednicki considers them particularly damaging—made by a Polish fellow prisoner that Dostoevsky even in Siberia held extreme anti-Polish views should rather emphasize by contrast the comparative objectivity of the scenes in *The House of the Dead*. Mr. Lednicki never raises the question whether these memoirs by Tokarzewski, written in the 1880s and published in 1907, may reflect a knowledge of Dostoevsky's later journalism and project his views back into the past. Even if they were literally true, they would merely establish that Dostoevsky held these political opinions earlier than we thought. In the body of Dostoevsky's creative writings neither the Polish question nor Polish literature holds an important place. It seems to me a strange lack of perspective to consider Dostoevsky "the greatest enemy Poland ever had" (p. 286).

Mr. Lednicki is one of those detractors of Dostoevsky who consider his whole later work as essentially political and judge his theology as only a "handmaiden of his politics" (p. 149). To defend this view (which would make Dostoevsky's greatness quite incomprehensible), Mr. Lednicki must speak of the "myth" of Dostoevsky's religiosity (p. 196), deny that he was a "deep and sincere Christian thinker" (*ibid.*), call him "fraudulent" (p. 258), "dishonest" (p. 286), a "genius of moral confusion" (p. 408), etc. He even revives, without adding any new evidence, the old unprovable charge that Dostoevsky raped a little girl (pp. 150 ff.). On page after page Dostoevsky's views are misinterpreted and trivialized. Thus the kiss which Christ gives to the Grand Inquisitor is called "theatrical," implying "an even deeper absence of divinity in the human world." It means, "This is the Son and not the Father who abandons mankind" (p. 341). But surely Dostoevsky's meaning is that Christ answers the Inquisitor in the only way religion can answer atheism—by silence and forgiveness. The Inquisitor is refuted by the silent kiss. This is proved by Alyosha's immediately afterwards kissing Ivan, as Christ did the Inquisitor, forgiving him for his atheism, answering his "revolt" by Christian mercy. Ivan knows it when he says, "That's plagiarism. You stole it from my poem." But even if Mr. Lednicki's interpretation of the kiss were tenable, nothing conclusive would be established about Dostoevsky's lack of faith, nor would the general message of the *Brothers Karamazov* be affected. The legend is told by the "atheist" Ivan, and his point of view is meant to be refuted by the rest of the book—by the Franciscan Christianity of Father Zosima and his brother Markel asking forgiveness even of the birds, by Dmitri hoping to sing his hymn to joy in the Siberian mines, and by Alyosha falling down and kissing the earth in ecstasy. The book ends with Alyosha affirming his faith in immortality, and a surprising "Hurrah for Karamazov" shouted by the boys.

One had to go through the whole work of Dostoevsky to prove what needs no proof, that Dostoevsky faced, with intense sincerity—existentially, as it is now the fashion to call it—the problems of God, Christ, and man, and conveys a vision of the universe and man's place in it which has appealed to millions of readers in the West who could not possibly have been sympathetic to his politics. That Dostoevsky held uncharitable and often fanatical views on political questions, and especially on Poland, is perfectly true; but this is a case of a common human failing, which does not invalidate either his art or his religion. It seems a pity that Mr. Lednicki, in his learned book, should be so preoccupied with Russia's inhumanity to Poland that he is impelled to distort the image and teaching of Dostoevsky.

R. W.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS. By Morton W. Bloomfield. [Lansing]: Michigan State College Press, 1952. xiv, 482 p.

Although not the first to deal with the subject, Professor Bloomfield's book is certainly the most extensive and systematic survey to date of the mediaeval history of the seven deadly sins. The twofold purpose of the study is "to present an introduction to the history (in its broadest sense) of the concept of the seven cardinal sins and to trace the use of the concept in mediaeval English literature (exclusive of drama) to Spenser" (p. xiii). A further indication of what the volume actually contains is to be found a few lines further on in the introduction: "The historical, or chronological, approach is the one employed in this study" (some readers may question this equation of historical with chronological and of "history in its broadest sense" with "historical, or chronological"). At any rate, the body of the text consists of a detailed and carefully documented chronological account of the major sources, the first fully developed statements, and most subsequent English literary uses of the concept of the seven deadly sins. The author does not pretend to any more than that (although the dust jacket does), and as a catalogue of sources and references the book should prove useful and convenient for all specialists in mediaeval literature.

A fair indication of the nature of Professor Bloomfield's study can be gained simply from the layout of the volume. Its 482 pages are almost equally divided between text and scholarly apparatus: 243 pages of text, 239 pages of bibliography, appendices, notes, and indices. The text itself is in two sections, the first concerned with the pre-Christian backgrounds of the ideas under discussion and with their general development in earlier mediaeval Europe. To the reviewer this seems the weakest part of the study. The author's rigid concentration on the sins, apart from their relationships to other doctrinal, philosophical, and cultural developments, often makes the discussion seem more arbitrary and arid than it should be. The need to cover large areas of time and space in small areas of print also tends to force Professor Bloomfield into a kind of flat-footed generalization which sometimes makes his study seem more naive than it really is; e.g., "Primitive man felt closer to animals and plants than we do today" (p. 29). This section does, however, have significant things to say, particularly in the clear-cut distinction between the cardinal and the deadly sins, and in the indication of varying kinds of emphasis upon the sins, both separately and collectively.

The second section of the study is a straight chronological catalogue, with brief commentary interspersed, of the various appearances of the sins in English literature from Old English through the fifteenth century, and in the *Faerie Queene*. The orderly presentation of its many details will probably make this the most useful portion of the book to the specialist—especially with the help of the forty pages of indices at the back. There is, however, a good deal of dead weight scattered throughout, in the form of résumés of literary works which should be relatively familiar to the advanced students of mediaeval culture who will be the principal if not the only users of this reference material.

Since the scolarly apparatus constitutes such a commanding bulk in Professor Bloomfield's book, it requires some comment. There is, of course, no need to be distressed by bulky apparatus per se. This work will probably find its place most frequently on the shelves of university libraries (the price will help to insure this), and very few people will sit down and read straight through it. Certainly, its bibliography and indices are an indispensable adjunct to its function as a reference work. Indeed, the fifty pages of comprehensive and conveniently cross-referenced bibliography come near to being the most valuable

single section of the book. The breadth and complexity of mediaeval scholarship make such collections always welcome.

The arrangement of the notes, however, is a good deal less fortunate. In the first place, a fair amount of the material in the longer notes does not seem significantly different in kind from the summary and reference matter which constitutes a large part of the text. It is not clear just what principle led the author to relegate some of such information to notes while retaining some in the text. This difficulty would be less troublesome if the notes had not been heaped together at the end of the volume. Whether the publisher or the author is responsible for the arrangement, it is a particularly annoying one in this case. The book has no line of argument which must be preserved unbroken by notes and explanations; it advances no thesis which must be progressively emergent; few of its users will be people who are likely to be intimidated by even the most formidable array of footnotes, but many will be understandably impatient at having their research interrupted by repeated leaps over 150 pages of text to complete a bibliographical reference. If the notes are important enough to occupy 136 pages of fine print, then they are important enough to have their identity and function preserved from the anonymity of a half-inch-thick bundle at the back of the book.

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VARIA

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ANNOUNCEMENT

La Revue des Lettres modernes is a new bimonthly journal edited by M. J. Minard, M. Boyer, G. Guy, and H. Patelier in Paris (73, rue du Cardinal-Lemoine). *CL* welcomes this nontechnical periodical which, its editors state, will seek "à mieux faire connaitre les lettres étrangères contemporaines pour faciliter leur confrontation, dans la perspective d'une histoire des idées et des relations littéraires... l'évolution des grands thèmes, et l'élaboration de ces mythes dont s'inspirent encore les créations modernes." It addresses itself to the "honnête homme cultivé" rather than to the specialist.